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Kent on Sunday

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Mid Edition No 593



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High price of wettest winter

Wide ranging impact of relentless weather

EDUCATION »

Are our grammars failing us?

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Sewing an old saggy cat into the tapestry of popular culture

EVERY song, film, TV show and book you have read over your life becomes a thread in popular culture's rich, complex tapestry.

As you grow older you can spend many a happy moment reflecting on the make-up of that tapestry, remembering the highs and the lows of all that has gone before.

Amid the colours and shapes there will be special illustrations on the embroidery - ones which stand out as having a significant role on so many.

For anyone whose childhood spanned the 1970s or 1980s, or who had children during that period, the warm pink face of Bagpuss will surely be one of those. In an era of few channels, before video games and computers took over our lives, Bagpuss was a rock we all clung to for 15 minutes of entertainment.

Remarkable, then, that this month marks the 40th anniversary of the very first episode being shown. More remarkable, that Bagpuss was born and raised in Kent. This week we went to visit where Bagpuss was created and filmed and met the man who gave birth to him - artist Peter Firmin - to celebrate his special birthday. We even got to meet Bagpuss himself.

Keeping with childhood, we take a look at our grammar schools after nearly a third in the county saw a drop in their results for children obtaining the benchmark five good GCSEs including English and maths this year. The debate is a fascinating one and once again shines the spotlight on the pros and cons of our selective system.

And we could hardly avoid the weather could we? As the county continues in the grip of wind and rain we look at the impact on Yalding, our woodlands and even the humble barn owl. Here's hoping it brightens up soon. Enjoy your weekend.

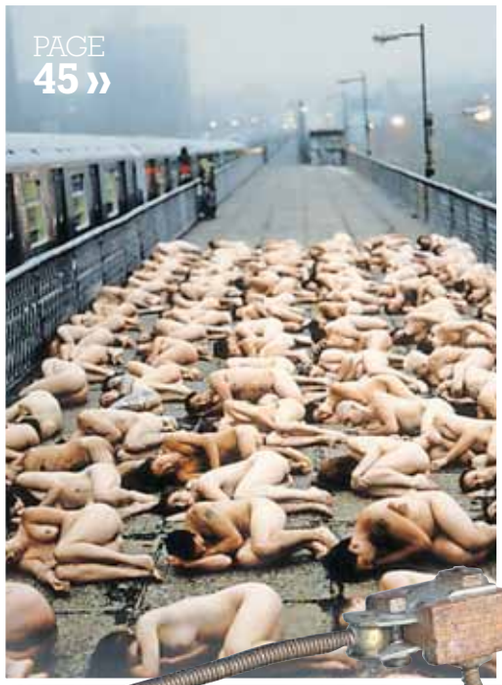


Editor **Chris Britcher**


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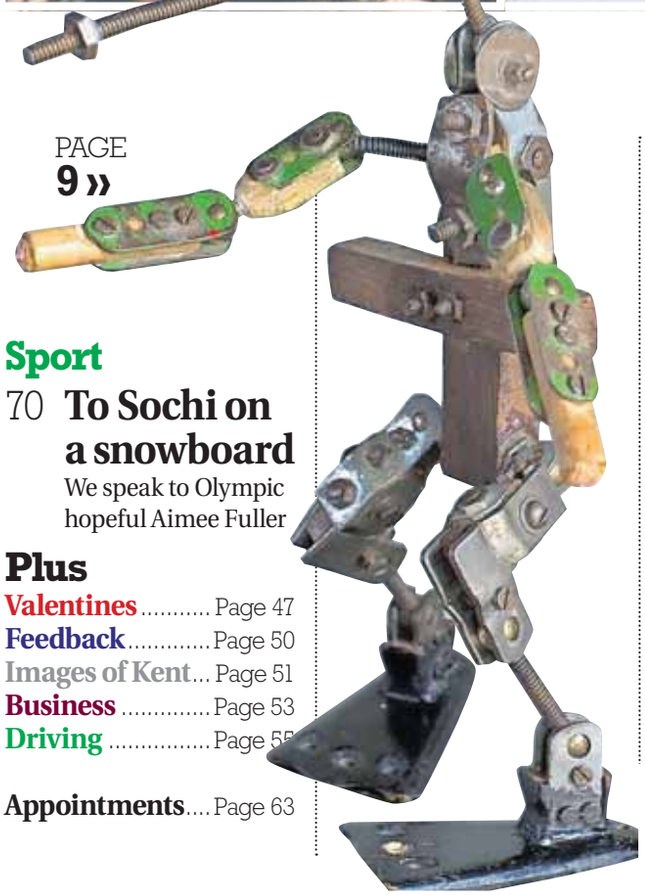


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£1,000 reward for brutal attack on couple

By Marijke Cox
marijke.cox@archant.co.uk





VICTIMS: Horrific images were released of the couple's injuries following brutal attack

A PROPERTY mogul has put up a £1,000 reward for information leading to a prosecution after a couple were subjected to "extreme gratuitous violence" in their own home.

Fergus Wilson, one of the county's biggest private landlords, said he was appalled by the crime and wanted to help put the offenders behind bars.

He made the pledge after reading the shocking story on our website www.kentnews.co.uk.

It followed the release by police this week of details of the violent attack which took place in Charing on Monday, January 20.

At around 8.30pm three thugs forced their way into a home in Petts Lane.

Police said the robbers subjected the couple to "extreme gratuitous violence" before stealing valuables including a Rolex Oyster watch, a diamond, a Burma ruby half eternity ring and a number of Krugerrand gold coins.

The couple, who have not been named and say they do not wish to openly discuss the case, were left needing hospital treatment for head injuries following the brutal raid which left them with extensive facial bruising.

A major police investigation is now under way.

Mr Wilson, who last year put up a £1,000 reward for information leading to a prosecution in a robbery case involving an elderly woman in Sittingbourne, said he was shocked by the violent attack.

"I was appalled to see yet again such an attack," he said.

"Everyone has to play their part in trying to bring a resolution to this sort of thing which is becoming all too common.

"This is not an isolated case.

"I have £1,000 burning a hole in my pocket and I'm ready to give this to anybody with information leading to the apprehension and prosecution of the offenders."

Police are appealing for information to help find the three men.

Anyone who was in the area at the time and may have seen something in relation to a vehicle, anything suspicious in the days leading up to the incident or has knowledge as to the location of the property, is asked to contact Kent Police on 01303 289353.

Alternatively, contact Kent Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 and quote crime reference ZY/2112/14.

Mr Wilson and his wife Judith Wilson are believed to have a property porfolio of around 1,000 homes.

River buses and Oyster cards to play key role in county town transport?

AMBITIOUS plans to transform the transport system in congested Maidstone have been touted as the local council looks to switch the focus onto public transport, walking and cycling.

Among the proposals put forward by Maidstone Borough Council are the introduction of a transport smart card - similiar to London's Oyster card - which allows users to pre-load credit for use on services such as road and river buses.

It is hoped that by 2031, the county town will have a transport network that focuses on 'sustainable options'.

The town has become infamous for its traffic problems in recent years as it struggles under an enormous increase in the use of cars.

The council says it will look to introduce a more targeted park and ride service, do away with short stay parking options while increasing long-stay parking options, improve highway capacity, develop pedestrian and cycling infrastructure as well as use the river as a transport corridor.

Bus services will increase in frequency and a car sharing intiative will be investigated, working in partnership with local employers.

Council leader Chris Garland said: "Maidstone is prosperous with a growing economy.

"We have given our officers the go ahead to work with Kent County Council and others to reach the agreements needed to improve highway capacity, air quality and transport choice so that Maidstone can grow and become more prosperous.

"We are not the highway authority but we want to work positively with KCC to improve the transport system and the problems we have now, and to provide a system for the homes and employment opportunities that our residents will need in the future."

The cabinet approved the 'vision' at a meeting on Monday.

KCC, which is responsible for the county's roads, has not formally agreed the plans.

Report brings praise on the accuracy of crime figures

THE fiasco over the accuracy of crime figures in the county seems finally to have been resolved after the force was told it had made ''considerable improvements'' in its recording process.

It comes after Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes commissioned police watchdog, Her Majesty' Inspectorate of Constabularly (HMIC), to review crime recording in the the county. It reported back last June saying steps must be taken to improve crime statistics and the way crimes were reclassified.

Now the latest report, carried out in November and published this week, has heaped praise on the progress to rectify the situation.

Mrs Barnes explained: ''I am now confident that the people of Kent can have trust in their crime figures.''

OAP who microwaved set of cutlery treated with oxygen

AN ELDERLY woman had to be treated in hospital on Thursday night after accidentally microwaving plastic cutlery.

She managed to inhale the pungent smoke released by the melting and burning plastic knife and fork and required medical treatment.

The drama happened to an 80-year-old woman from Sturry Hill in Canterbury.

Kent Fire and Rescue Service arrived on the scene at 8pm and administered first aid, giving oxygen to the woman before the arrival of the ambulance.

Canterbury crew manager Paul Moore said: ''Mistakes can and do happen so the best advice I can give people is to always take care in the kitchen and keep flammable items away from potential heat sources.''

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

People smuggling gang handed jail sentences

FIVE members of a criminal gang who smuggled Sri Lankan immigrants into the UK through Dover and the Channel Tunnel have been jailed for a total of 23 years.

The men, four Sri Lankans and one British national, were caught following a Home Office-led investigation, supported by Kent Police, the National Crime Agency (NCA), Europol and French, German and Swiss law enforcement agencies.

The court heard how the five men charged their Sri Lankan 'clients' around £4,500 each to get them into the UK.

Many of the smuggling attempts were foiled by Border Force officers who discovered stowaways hiding in vehicles at Calais, Dunkerque, Coquelles and Dover.

Investigations are ongoing to find the individuals who entered the UK illegally.

CEO and chair quit trust as pressure intensifies to boost criticised services

By Joe Bill
joe.bill@archant.co.uk

TWO senior figures of the under pressure Medway NHS Foundation Trust have quit two months after regulators issued a stark warning to improve or be replaced.

The trust is responsible for the Medway Maritime Hospital in Gillingham.

This week it saw chief executive Mark Devlin and chair Denise Harker leave their posts.

In November, Monitor, the sector regulator of NHS-funded health care services, had warned if significant steps to overhaul services were not implemented it had the power to change the management team.

At the time, Mr Devlin insisted work was under way to deliver the required improvemtns.

The warning came after discovering problems at the trust were broader than those uncovered by Sir Bruce Keogh, medical director of NHS England, last August, which caused it to be put into special measures.



CHANGES: Medway Maritime

It faced criticism for poor communication with patients, poor management of deteriorating patients and long waits in A&E.

It was one of 11 medical trusts put into special measures following an initial probe into high mortality rates.

In a statement issued announcing his departure, Mr Devlin said: "After four years as chief executive I feel this is the right moment to move on and encourage a new leadership to build on what's been achieved and take the trust forward into its next phase."

Senior independent director at the trust, Colin Wilby, said: "On behalf of the trust board and governors, I would like to thank Mark and Denise for their dedication and integrity. Their commitment to public service is indisputable and we wish them both every success in the future."

Their replacements are expected to be announced next month.

Separately, it was confirmed this week a £5m series of improvements is to be rolled out at the emergency department of the Medway Maritime, in order to improve facilities.

Key sections of the new-look department should be completed in time for next winter.



VICTIM: Falconio and Joanna Lees

Falconio body is hidden in well, says show

AN AUSTRALIAN TV programme claims it has found the remains of murdered British backpacker Peter Falconio.

The 28-year-old had been travelling across Australia with his girlfriend Joanna Lees in 2001 when they were attacked in the outback.

Mr Falconio, who worked at Pfizer in Sandwich, was never seen again and his body never recovered.

Ms Lees was bound and gagged by the attacker but managed to flee the scene.

Now current affairs programme Today Tonight says it believes his body was dumped in a well on a property called Neutral Junction Station, a one-million acre ranch not previously searched by police.

The new evidence comes from crime writer Peter Jackson, who claims a friend saw a truck matching one driven by Mr Falconio's killer, Bradley Murdoch, on the night of the murder.

Northern Territory police say they have not been approached with the new evidence.

A search by the TV company using abseilers was called off because of inclement weather. The well currently has some 14ft of water in it.

Bradley Murdoch was found guilty of the murder in 2005.

Woman cried rape to cover up her affair

A 32-year-old woman who made up a story she had been raped in an alleyway as she returned home from baby-sitting to cover up from her husband an affair she was having, has avoided jail.

Jessica Gore, from Curtis Road, Ashford, admitted perverting the course of justice at an earlier hearing and was given an eight month suspended prison sentence at Canterbury Crown Court this week.

The description of the man given by Gore resembled an e-fit image issued by police following recent sexual assaults in the town.

But enquiries by detectives revealed that Gore had in fact been seeing another man and the claim of rape had been made up as an excuse to her husband for her returning home late.

Detective Inspector Richard Vickery said: "The allegation was not admitted until after extensive enquiries at a time when there was understandable public concern about a number of earlier assaults in the area."

KCC dips into reserves to fix pothole problem

AN EXTRA £2.5 million is being taken from County Hall reserves to pay for repairing damage caused to roads by the severe storms and flooding.

It comes in addition to the £4.6m spent earlier this year in the 'find and fix' campaign, which looked to tackle every fault in Kent's roads.

KCC leader Paul Carter met with ministers on Monday to ask for money to pay for repairs following the extreme weather, which has caused severe damage in the county.

Whether or not they agree, however, remains to be seen.

Instead, KCC has dipped into its reserves so work can begin.

Cllr Carter said: "We've got 5,000 miles of road in the county and we estimate the cost of repairing the potholes caused by the excessive rainfall could be between £3m and £5m.

"The roads are in a damaged state as a result of these events and we can't hang around."

Blaze drama as fire hits student houses

FIRE crews have praised students and staff for their handling of a major fire which ripped through student accomodation at the University of Kent in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

Four fire engines were called to Park Wood in Canterbury shortly before 4am after an extractor fan caught alight in a first floor bathroom. A quick-thinking student raised the alarm and notified security staff.

The fire spread to the roof of the property, with damage reported to two properties and 10 evacauted.

No-one was reported injured.

Canterbury watch manager Mark Jones said: "I would like to highlight the planning shown by the university as all the students and staff knew exactly what to do once the fire was detected.

"We were able to concentrate our efforts on fighting the fire straight away knowing that all of the occupants had been safely evacuated and were out of harms way."

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agenda

What will make next week's headlines...

Finance chiefs to unveil budget spending plans

MEDWAY Council will this week unveil its budget, setting out spending for the new financial year.

And, like neighbouring Kent County Council, it will be forced into making cuts due to a reduction in funding from central government.

Details will be set out by authority chiefs, including deputy leader and finance member Alan Jarrett, on Monday.

Last year a council tax hike of 1.99 per cent was implemented to help stave off the pressure, but cuts were still necessary. They included the early intervention grant, which includes Sure Start centres.

In a report to cabinet earlier this month, the council said the overall financial settlement figure from



government to the authority would be lower than in previous years.

The Government announced in December that councils face an average spending-power cut of 2.9 per cent in 2014/15.

Public get say over flood woes in high-risk town

THOSE affected by flooding in one of the worst hit areas of the county will meet on Wednesday to discuss the impacts and potential future action with representatives from the Environment Agency.

Kent County Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council will also attend the meeting which is being held at the Angel Centre in Tonbridge at 7.30pm and is open to residents of Danvers Road, Barden Road and others in the immediate vicinity.

It is one of a number of public meetings being planned over the coming months to allow those directly affected by flooding the chance to discuss local impacts and future action.

...also

Big weekend ballot opens

MORE than 25,000 free tickets to the county's top tourist attractions will be put up for grabs from Monday as the Kent Big Weekend returns once again.

The website - www.kentbigweekend.co.uk - goes live on Monday and will remain open until February 24.

Police plan 'refreshed'

POLICE and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes will on Tuesday unveil a "re-freshed" police and crime plan which sets out priorities and resources.

She said it does not "fundamentally change" the existing one but ensures priori-ties reflect the current needs of the public.

Town book project starts

A UNIQUE project encouraging residents in Thanet to all read a book based on Margate by a highly acclaimed author starts on Tuesday.

Hundreds of copies of The Positively Last Performance will be given away at various locations to get people involved.

Minister back to school

POLICING minister and Ashford MP Damian Green will attend a special assembly on Friday at Hamstreet Primary School to raises awareness of a newly launched bullying campaign.

NSPCC's Now I Know looks to educate children on how to stay safe from abuse.

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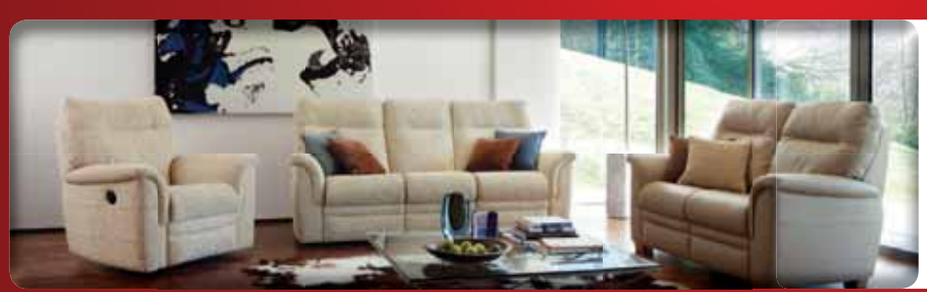
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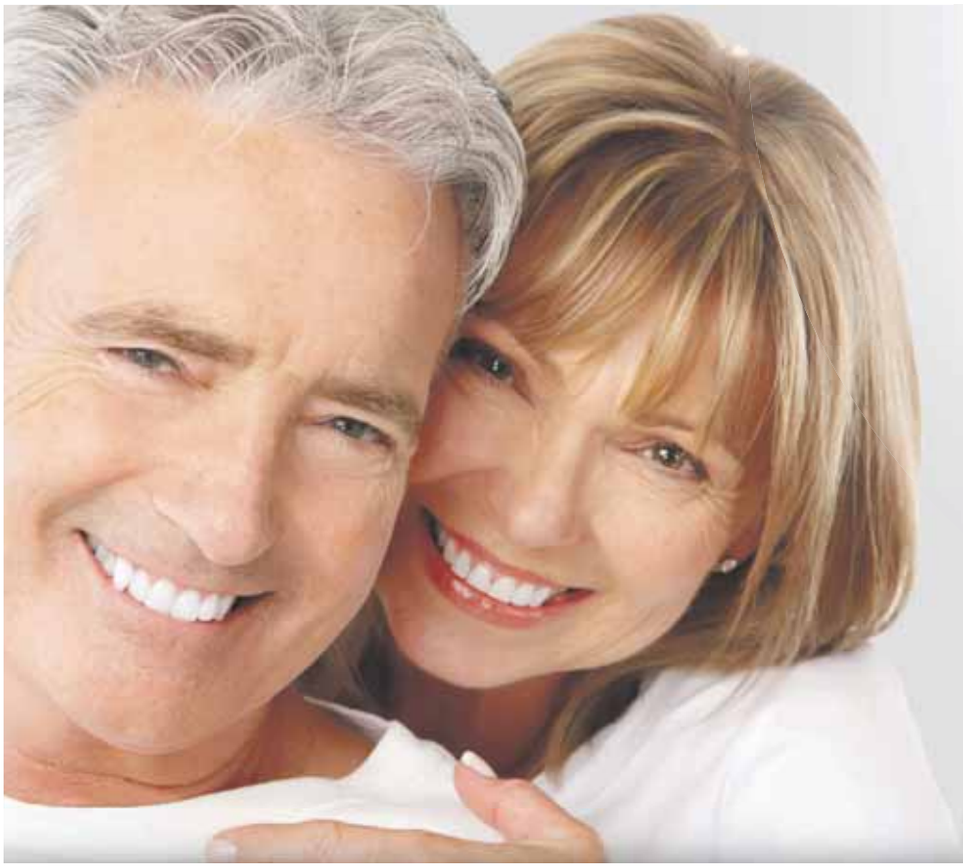




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Pictures: ADY KERRY



1974-2014: Bagpuss in the window featured in the TV show (Peter Firmin stands outside it on front cover)

Birthday boy Bagpuss and the man who created the legend

The old, saggy cloth cat celebrates his 40th birthday this month, so **Chris Britcher** went in search of his creator, Peter Firmin, who with creative partner Oliver Postgate, bred TV favourites Ivor the Engine, the Clangers and Pogles' Wood

SOMETIMES you feel a little like you're sat in a bizarre dream.

I'm sat around a kitchen table in a very pleasant farmhouse just outside Canterbury, chatting to the son of Oliver Postgate – the man whose fertile imagination brought us some of the nation's most cherished children's TV characters.

And as we do, Peter Firmin – the man whose talent brought those creations to life – emerges and plonks the original Bagpuss onto the table. Not places. Plonks.

It's a bit like trying to carry on a conversation when the Queen walks into the room. You can't help but keep glancing in their direction and wonder if you'll get to meet her.

While that distinctive pink cat perches beside me, the odd sight of the skeleton of one of the original Clangers is put into my hands – the knitted skin and stuffing long since seen off by a gnawing mouse.

But then this is no normal place I find myself in; this is to those who grew up with children's television in the 1970s and 1980s what Willy Wonka's factory is for the chocoholic.

Because this is the home of Peter Firmin and his wife Joan. For more than 50 years they have lived in Blean, watching the village – at the midway point between Canterbury and Whitstable – boom as housing estates grew and the nearby school expanded.

Alongside the farmhouse are a gaggle of unassuming buildings... yet they bore witness to the conception, creation and birth of some iconic characters.

Bagpuss, the Clangers, Ivor the Engine, Basil Brush – they all came to life here and much more besides.

The old cow shed was the workshop where Mr Firmin would toil, creating sets, puppets and drawings which would stamp themselves into the memory of generations of children. An old pig shed played its part too.

A fine old barn once played host to the alien landscape of the Clangers and Pogles' Wood; the house and the farmyard was the setting for 1960s puppet series the Pingwings.

At the back of the house is the very window used as the shop front in Bagpuss. And for a few glorious moments I hold the fluffy pink cat which Emily (Mr Firmin's youngest daughter who featured in the series) held in the show – the other is on display at the museum in Canterbury. They say you should never meet your heroes, but on this occasion he didn't disappoint.

And it is Bagpuss which brings us here to this holy ground.

It was 40 years ago this very month the old, saggy cloth cat first appeared on our screens.

He appeared for just 13 episodes – the run starting on February 20, 1974, and being all over three months later. They would never make another.

But the episodes which exuded warmth and fine storytelling, would forever cement his place in popular culture; capturing the imagination of both children and their parents through countless repeats and endless adulation.

"Bagpuss will never die," reflects Mr Firmin, the man whose handiwork created the legendary cat.

"Because of all the toys and merchandise he's become almost like a national treasure, hasn't he?"

So surely there's been a temptation to make just a few more episodes?

"We've always said we'd never let anyone remake Bagpuss," Mr Firmin replies, "maybe one day in the future, when I'm dead and gone.

"No one has ever come forward with an idea – people have always asked – but Oliver always used to say 'over my dead body' and I agree with him."

Mr Postgate died in Broadstairs in December 2008. He was 83. His rights to Smallfilms, Mr Postgate's production company, shifted to his son, Daniel Postgate – himself a successful illustrator and scriptwriter in his own right.

Daniel is 50 this year – although has a youthful look which defies his years – and finds himself now replacing his father in working closely with Mr Firmin as they supervise the rebirth of the Clangers which will make an appearance on both sides of the Atlantic next year (see box).

Don't expect to see Bagpuss receive the same treatment though.

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"Bagpuss was such an individual thing it would be very difficult to re-make it," says Mr Firmin. "We made it in 1974 but it had an Edwardian feel to it because of the way we filmed it.

"It's very English and I don't think it would translate overseas."

Dan Postgate is perhaps a little more open to the idea – although not necessarily for the UK market.

He explained: "An American producer wanted to set it in America, I think if you set it in somewhere like Cape Cod, with those weather boarded shops in New England, had a wooden Native American in the corner, I think the characters would translate well to the American audience in that way.

"But it would be different and away from Smallfilms' style. But they've never seen it in America, and they probably never will. I think everyone knows Bagpuss so well over here that I think it would be considered not quite right to muck about with it."

Adds Peter Firmin: "It's a bit like Winnie the Pooh and what Disney did to it. It was so different to the original EH Shepard drawings that many people were up in arms about it.

"But we had no inkling Bagpuss' popularity would last so long.

"Certainly at the time we were making it, I felt we were doing well.

"We had done the Clangers, we were writing books, they were still showing Pogles' Wood and there was an amazing concentration of work we were involved in.

"Bagpuss was like the culmination of everything we'd done before. It became the pinnacle of what we did. It was our best thing ever and I really enjoyed making them."

Peter Firmin first met Oliver Postgate back in London in 1958 when he was 30 and trying to establish a name for himself as an illustrator, with varying degrees of success.

In terms of the impact on children's television, that meeting was akin to Paul McCartney and John Lennon first sitting down and deciding to write some songs together on the world of pop music. Things would never be the same again.

Today, Mr Firmin is a remarkably sprightly 85 and thoroughly entertaining company as he recalls that first meeting and how the partnership would develop.

"I had been trying to freelance as an illustrator after leaving a studio I'd been working for, in Bond Street," he explains.

"Then Oliver came along looking to find someone to do the drawings of some live animation he was working on in the studio. Oliver was working in TV and thought he could do so much more in children's television.

"He'd been referred to me by the Central School of Art, where I'd been teaching. He had asked if they could recommend someone hard up enough to do a lot of work for little money.

"I reluctantly agreed. I thought as it was only six weeks I'd give it a go. I thought television was a bit crap – and it was back then. Children's television was all live, with string puppets and crude animation.

"I found I could work things with cardboard mechanics and Oliver brought his camera and taught himself to do animation so between us it worked well."

Their first collaboration was on Alexander the Mouse, a show Mr Postgate had created and which used a series of magnets to allow the characters to move. Mr Firmin was drafted in to provide the backgrounds.

It impressed TV bosses enough for Mr Postgate to form Smallfilms – the production company which would become synonymous with a host of much-loved shows.

Contrary to popular belief, Mr Firmin was never a shareholder in the venture. Instead, he simply kept ownership of all the characters he created. In essence, it meant that Smallfilms always needed the artist's seal of approval to progress. A situation which remains to this day.

He explains: "Oliver would say at the beginning of the show if I'd make the puppets and agree a fee, and then I'd do it. Sometimes it would be a huge amount of work, some not so much. But we just did it."

Before long, Mr Firmin and his family had moved out of their home in Battersea in pursuit of the good life in the countryside and for their children to attend a country school. After visiting a friend in Blean, Mr Firmin strolled past a farmhouse and instantly fell in love with it. A few months later they moved in.





POSTGATE & FIRMIN: THE NEXT GENERATION – AS DAN FILLS FATHER'S SHOES

Oliver Postgate

DESPITE his remarkable success, Oliver Postgate had a life-long battle with both his creativity and his desire to make a difference.

A committed socialist, he was an outspoken campaigner in the fight against nuclear weapons, appearing and speaking at rallies for CND.

Not only a talented story writer and programme maker, he was also an inventor of gadgets and continued to create late into his life.

In one of his final interviews he said of himself: ''I can't ever think in terms of being happy. I can get pleased and excited, but I'm perpetually worried because my imagination is completely unbridled. When there is nothing for it to tap into I feel quite lost. I'm like a captain with no ship.''

Born into a family of some influence in 1925, his father was the writer and historian Raymond Postgate, who founded the Good Food Guide. His mother was Daisy Lansbury, daughter of former Labour Party leader George Lansbury.

In 1913, she had helped suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst evade police capture by disguising herself as her. She was the aunt of the famous actress Angela Lansbury – who, in turn, was Oliver's cousin.

He was a stage manager for TV company Associated-Rediffusion in 1957 – working on shows for ITV – when he became convinced he could do better in the children's department.

He met Peter Firmin and the rest is history.

However, his socialist roots sometimes sat uncomfortably with the money he would go on to make.

His son, Dan - one of three boys Oliver had, in addition to three step-children - explains: ''Making money wasn't really top of his list.

''He had offers to do advertising; for example, they wanted to use Noggin the Nog for when the Tories were selling off the water companies. He said they could as long as he could say it was public theft.

''Even when he was quite rich he just lived in a one-bedroom flat in Broadstairs. If he got money he would just give it away to charity.''

One donation led to the creation of a Bagpuss wing at a Romanian orphanage.

''His father was an old-fashioned type of parent and Oliver always wanted to impress him.

''His brother was very clever and I think Oliver wanted to try and emulate him. He always thought his brother was more important but it wasn't true.

''It was a funny type of fame for my father. In later life he was very much involved in writing – very involved in the anti-nuclear campaign – involved in worrying about the planet. He was always very imaginative and creative.''

His voice was familiar to millions as narrator of many of the programmes he created.

Upon his death, columnist Charlie Brooker said there was ''no more calming sound in the world than the voice of Oliver Postgate'' adding ''with him narrating your life, you'd feel cosy and safe even during a gas explosion''.

He died at a nursing home in Broadstairs in 2008. He was 83.

Dan Postgate

DESCRIBING himself as a freelance author, illustrator and cartoonist, Dan Postgate is also the heir to the Smallfilms empire, created by his father.

The father-of-two lives and works in Whitstable – just miles from where he grew up in Blean.

He was 10 when Bagpuss was made and remembers watching his father at work, something he described as ''very boring'' because of the stop-motion animation work he did.

After leaving school he worked as a chef, including a stint at a studio being used by rocker Ozzy Osbourne and his band ''which involved lots of high jinks''.

But it was creative endeavours where his future lay. Not that having a famous father made life easy for him.

''Some people seem to think that having the Postgate name opened doors,'' he explains, ''but that's not the case at all as you just have to be good at your job.''

He enjoyed award-winning success with his Smelly Bill book and has published others including Kevin Saves The World and Engelbert Sneem. He also did cartoons for the business pages of the Sunday Times.

Today, he is executive producer and scriptwriter on the new series of the Clangers



CREATING: Daniel Postgate and Peter Firmin in the studio at Blean

> **"Bagpuss was like the culmination of everything we'd done before. It became the pinnacle of what we did. It was our best thing ever"**
>
> **Peter Firmin,** Bagpuss's co-creator

Within a year, Mr Postgate joined them in Kent – first living in one of the fine, tall homes on the seafront in Whitstable and then taking over the site of an old pub in Blean itself.

It allowed their creative talents to flourish and both their homes and family became involved in the productions – Joan Firmin knitting the original Clangers, Emily Firmin, their daughter, appearing as the young girl in Bagpuss, and their home used as the backdrop to many of them.

"It was only our faith in ourselves that gave us the confidence to keep making the programmes," Mr Firmin reflected this week.

"Nothing could have happened without Oliver. He was hugely inventive; using Meccano to make cameras and equipment that worked for animations. He was great like that. I can always draw things, but I'd not have the faith to do those sorts of things. But the two of us worked together well.

"Ideas flowed between us and that was really why we had drive to go on."

In 1969 they created the Clangers and in 1974 they reached their commercial peak with Bagpuss.

Noggin the Nog kept the success going and there was a period of a decade where it seemed one of their shows was on pretty much every day.

Mr Firmin and Oliver Postgate both capitalised on their successes with at one stage their income going up so much that the taxman became convinced Mr Firmin had been concealing previous gains.

But it was when, in 1999, Bagpuss was named the UK's favourite children's television programme in a BBC poll, that they enjoyed perhaps their biggest windfall.

"When Bagpuss won that poll it immediately boosted the sale of the videos. And then the merchandising suddenly shot up."

Mr Firmin and Smallfilms retain all the rights to their characters but granted the merchandise rights to a company called Coolabi which, in turn, strikes deals to produce a range of goods for the likes of Bagpuss and the Clangers.

Adds Mr Firmin: "Suddenly everyone wanted to make Bagpuss toys and it went crazy. Bagpuss turned up everywhere."

For Mr Firmin, it provided a vital boost to his pension. Oliver Postgate, however, a confirmed socialist, found the influx of funds more difficult to square away.

Adds Mr Firmin: "There was so much cash coming in after that, that's why Oliver supported the Romanian hospice. He wanted to do something good with it. Someone approached him and he built a wing for them."

Organised by the Hospices of Hope in Tunbridge Wells, the contribution has helped thousands of children.

For Mr Firmin, the money has allowed him to stay in his beloved farmhouse and continue to work on a wide variety of artistic endeavours.

His daughter Emily, herself fast approaching 50, now lives and works in Whitstable as a successful artist – her papier mache creations are a familiar sight in the town.

But the legacy of the Postgate and Firmin families stretch far further than this part of east Kent.

They live on in the hearts and minds of millions who grew up with their creations, whose childhood was in many ways defined by the fruits of their imaginations.

And for that we owe them a debt of gratitude. Or, at least, I do.



BEHIND THE SCENES: A slightly embarrassed Clanger reveals all to show how the TV magic was created

Clangers return from deep space to appeal to a fresh generation

A FEW months after Bagpuss first appeared on our screens, the Clangers were bidding farewell.

First launched in 1969 they ran for two series – some 27 ten-minute episodes in total – finishing in 1972.

A bizarre concept back then – but capitalising on the appetite for space exploration following the Moon landings – the Clangers were a family of mouse-like creatures living on a little planet and communicating in whistles.

Although popular, they never reached the levels of Bagpuss – but are set for a revival which could see them make a splash on both sides of the Atlantic.

A new series is under way which will air in 2015 on both US digital kids' channel Sprout – providing access to some 130 million households - and the BBC's Cbeebies.

Both Mr Firmin and Dan Postgate are executive producers on the project, working together for the very first time.

Explains Mr Firmin: "I was becoming an illustrator again when the new Clangers thing brought Dan and I together to be involved in this new series.

"Oliver and I owned everything – we kept the rights to the characters. We had merchandising agents but they didn't have publishing or filmmaking rights. It is only since Coolabi expanded that we cautiously allowed them to develop the Clangers."

Adds Dan Postgate: "We were remastering Bagpuss and were talking about making it an international thing when I thought it would be better to do the Clangers.

"They don't speak and they're aliens, so there are no cultural issues. You could sell them internationally, just with a local narrator.

"But there was a problem with the quality of the original Clangers and it was perceived as slightly on the slow side for modern children. Then a chap came over from America and he said he'd like to do the Clangers and that all kicked it off.

"The question is, do you want to leave things and let them dwindle and disappear, which would happen with the Clangers, or inject some new life into it and save the original?

"This is not a remake, it's carrying on after a 45-year break really, so all in all it sounded like the most sensible thing to do. It's a homage to both Oliver and Peter."

Adds Mr Firmin: "Dan's writing the scripts and I'm doing sketches when they need characters vetted and the costumes right.

"We went up to see the first sets of Mother Clanger's garden and they'd got it totally wrong. So I did this sketch and the next time I went up they had turned my sketch into a model brilliantly – they did a really good job."

Adds Mr Postgate: "They are really good in that respect. I thought as this big multi-million dollar company they'd just pat us on the head and throw us some biscuits now and again – but they've been really good.

"The Clangers are still knitted and it's looking good. The first 26 episodes should air next year. It will be interesting to see what the Americans make of it."

Smallfilms' hall of fame

1958 - Alexander The Mouse (ITV)
1959-63 - Ivor the Engine (ITV)
1959-65 - Noggin the Nog (BBC)
1960-65 - Pingwings (ITV)
1966-67 - Pogles' Wood (BBC)
1969-72 - The Clangers (BBC)
1979-80 - Noggin the Nog (BBC)
1974 - Bagpuss (BBC)
1975-77 - Ivor the Engine (colour for the BBC)

Did you know?

- Only 13 episodes of Bagpuss were ever made.
- Bagpuss' pink fur was not intentional. Peter Firmin had taken some material to an outlet in Folkestone to create a tabby-like colour. Instead the dyes went wrong and it emerged pink. Mr Firmin liked it and stuck with it.
- There are two original Bagpuss puppets used in the TV series. One is held by Emily in the opening credits and remains with Mr Firmin. The other is in the Canterbury Museum.
- Oliver Postgate estimated he made, in total, £1.5m from his creations during his lifetime.
- When they first started benefiting financially from their TV work, Mr Firmin says his salary rose from £20 a week to £70, the equivalent today of rising from £400 to £1,390. The taxman, however, was suspicious at the rise and assumed Mr Firmin had been concealing previous earnings and insisted on his wife revealing her jewellery to see if they had invested undeclared funds that way.
- Peter Firmin has six children, all daughters. Oliver Postgate had six children (three of which are step-children), all boys.
- During their fame, Peter Firmin used to tour schools taking with him a suitcase of original characters used in their TV shows. On one occasion he arrived in Belfast during the troubles only to be grilled by security. When they discovered he was carrying Mr and Mrs Pogle from Pogles' Wood the puppets became minor celebrities as they were passed around - although didn't escape unscathed, with Mr Pogle needing to have his nose fixed after it got damaged.
- Peter Firmin still has the original Soup Dragon and Iron Chicken from the Clangers.

Boom, boon... 50 years on and Basil is still paying his way

AMID all the success of Bagpuss and the Clangers, it is often overlooked that Peter Firmin created another cornerstone of 1970s and 1980s TV – Basil Brush.

What's more, he continues to own the right to use the puppet and has been making a tidy sum every time he appears on TV.

He was created for a series called The Three Scampies about an out-of-work circus act which featured Howard Williams as the circus owner and Ivan Owen animating and voicing Basil.

Explains Mr Firmin: "I made Basil Brush in 1963 and I've still got a little share in him.

"They had an idea for a programme which was like an out-of-work circus act and wanted two tiger cubs to start with.

"But when they asked me to make the puppets, I pointed out tigers would be the wrong shape for glove puppets.

"So I said how about we did a fox and a hedgehog, with the fox being like Terry Thomas; a hunting, fishing, shooting fox. So I made the puppets.

"I didn't name them, but they couldn't afford to pay me for making the puppets because they were so mean, so they said they'd pay me £6 for each programme; but of course those puppets remained my property so they were renting it from me. So I made my money every time they showed him.

"So Basil has been very good to me over the years."



They use special signs outside the homes of the vulnerable to exploit them and are making hay after the recent storms gave them the perfect excuse to call on householders. **Marijke Cox** highlights the threat...



TAKE CARE: Always ring round for quotes from at least two other reputable builders before agreeing to any work

Warning as poor weather blows in conmen builders

IF THE recent severe flooding and weather has taught us anything, it's that in times of need community spirit reigns.

Yet while those affected united, helping one another pick up the pieces, quite literally, of their damaged homes, heartless rogue traders were instead sizing up potential victims, targeting easy prey in their quest for a quick buck.

And with the relentless wet and windy weather still upon us, there is no let-up by these conmen.

Kent Trading Standards warned that rogue traders are taking advantage of the bad weather, knocking on doors to report damage to householders – whether or not it actually exists – and offering to do the work for a cut price cost which, over time, inflates significantly despite usually shoddy repairs.

Just this week, crooks stepped up their game, leaving footballs outside properties in Hartley, near Meopham, as markers to signal 'good targets'.

Traditionally, they leave paint or cement marks to signal an elderly person or people who had been conned in the past.

With victims of flooding temporarily blindsided by the recent events, it means they are more vulnerable to being conned.

"The danger is if someone thinks they do have work that needs doing to their home and someone calls round saying they will do it for them for a relatively small amount of money, people are persuaded to have it done," said Richard Strawson, Kent Trading Standards manager.

"Our experience shows that while quite a low price is given at the start, this becomes inflated over time.

"They will highlight other work that needs doing and the price increases.

"Roof work is particularly difficult; a rogue trader can claim that more work needs doing and it's hard for the householder to verify because they're not up the ladder.

"We've had cases where costs have started out as low as £50 for slates to be replaced.

"But when the rogue trader comes back down the ladder, they'll say something else is wrong, that water is going to start coming into the house.

"They'll quite often give a story which worries that householder so much, they up the price for the additional work, and the person will pay because they are so concerned they need to get it done. Afterwards they realise they have parted with a lot of money and the work will not have been done satisfactorily."

Elderly people are particularly vulnerable to being conned by cowboy builders and rogue traders.

Conmen will go around neighbourhoods looking for signs of 'good targets'.

"You get people who just go to every door and you get others who look at all the houses and look for indications someone who is elderly lives there; the house might not be very modern, there might be handles at the front," said Mr Strawson.

"Sadly, rogue traders pinpoint elderly and vulnerable people."

They often leave subtle markers on properties to remind them they were conned before and an easy target – that's provided the rogue trader hadn't got caught out or prosecuted since.

A signal could also be left to flag up a property to a criminal colleague.

"We've been aware for quite a number of years that rogue traders repeatedly choose houses where they have got money in the past," said Mr Strawson.

"The names get written in a little black book, I suppose so they remember where they've been before.

"There are examples where they will leave paint marks on the walls so it identifies a potential victim.

"Recently, in Hartley, the community warden informed us that three footballs were placed at three houses in the same road where there was no reason for them to be there. There were no children at those houses.

"Subsequently a cold caller called at the addresses and so we were alerted.

"Sometimes rogue traders work in teams, so it might be to flag the house up to another member of that team.

"Like any criminal, they scout the area to look for potential victims.

"It just happened that this time they were footballs, but they will use other things another time."

Kent Trading Standards works closely with Kent Police to crack down on these criminals and many cases have led to prosecution.

The force advised people who have suffered property damage in recent weeks to beware of cold callers and rogue traders seeking to exploit the situation.

Chief Inspector Lee Russell said: "Unfortunately, some people hope to cash in on others' misery by offering to do repair work when they're not properly qualified or, in some cases, have no intention of actually carrying out the work.

"There's a lot that people can do to help themselves if they've suffered damage and my advice is to stay alert to the dangers of bogus traders and check our advice list. [see box off]

"Representatives from water, gas and electricity companies rarely visit without appointments. If there's a real emergency, police and firefighters are likely to be present

"Even if you have an appointment with a utility company, check the person's identification carefully.

"If in any doubt about the person's legitimacy, call the company to verify identification. Find the telephone number from the telephone book, a recent bill or on the internet. Don't rely on the contact number provided by the visitor.

"If you need to go inside to make a telephone call, ensure that you leave the person waiting outside and that you shut the door so that they can't get in without your permission.

"If in any doubt, don't allow anyone to enter your home. Instead, make an appointment so that they visit at a later date."

He said if repairs needed doing, to ask for estimates or quotes in writing and ring more than three traders to get an average price for the job.

"Remember, traders must give you written notice of your right to seven days cancellation when agreeing to do work at your home, including work gained from a cold call," he said.

Mr Strawson said Kent Trading Standards will take action against traders not offering a cancellation notice on work.

"Knocking door to door is not illegal but there are rules in place," he said.

"Quite regularly we prosecute; from not issuing cancellation paperwork right up to fraud and aggressive trade practices. We have some cases at the moment going through."

With no end in sight at the moment to the wet weather, Mr Strawson urged people to be vigilant and to be on guard on behalf of neighbours, particularly those who are elderly and vulnerable.

"When there is foul weather it's an opportunist's time," he said.

"We would like to see our work is reducing the number but we do get quite a lot of rogue traders from outside Kent at various times of the year. They're not always Kent based.

"But we do everything we can to pursue them."

Medway's Trading Standards team is also warning people to watch out for cowboy builders.

Peter Hicks, portfolio holder for community safety, said: "After previous storms and flooding we have found rogue traders will use the bad weather to frighten vulnerable residents into having unnecessary work done or they will fix the damage but will charge exorbitant prices."

To report a rogue trader call 08454 040506 or visit www.kent.gov.uk.

For Medway's Fair Traders Scheme visit www.medway.gov.uk or call 01634 333333.

DOs AND DON'Ts

- Ensure all damaged property is secured as soon as possible
- Use traders who are recommended by family or friends, or choose someone from schemes intended to improve business standards and provide increase consumer confidence.
- Don't deal with doorstep callers offering work on your home or garden
- Use an approved trader scheme by visiting **www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk**

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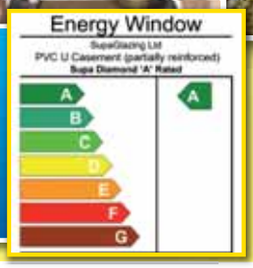
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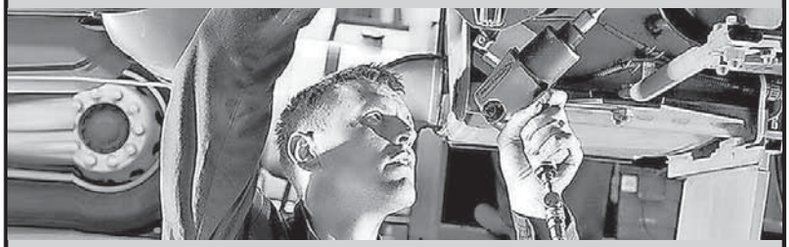
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A p iv k

One month on from the devastating floods which hit the village of Yalding, reporter **Joe Bill** looks at the aftermath – both in terms of those rebuilding their lives and the efforts to prevent any repeat.

THE debris lining the streets of Yalding after water engulfed the village damaging homes and putting lives at risk this Christmas is finally starting to clear.

But one month on from the devastating Christmas floods, the physical and emotional scars remain.

Many have only just been able to return to their homes; farmers have seen fields ruined; and there are deep psychological wounds for those who saw their possessions threatened by rising flood water.

Now people want to know how it will be prevented from happening again.

On Monday of this week, Kent County Council leader Paul Carter went to Westminster to meet with ministers to discuss central government financial support.

Later this month he will meet with the Environment Agency to discuss what can be done to avoid a repeat.

Chairman of Yalding Parish Council Geraldine Brown suffered major damage to her home for the second time in 13 years. Yalding also suffered serious flooding in 2000.

Mrs Brown's ground floor level was two foot deep in water during Christmas and she is still using dehumidifying machinery to clear her house now.

She said: "Things are far from back to normal here yet. There are still people not living in their homes and it could take up to six months to get everything sorted.

"The doors in the house are bowed and the walls are soaked. Much of my furniture was ruined and has had to be thrown in a skip. But I wasn't even one of the worst hit.

"This flood was worse than the one in 2000, because there were more houses affected and more damage was done."

Mrs Brown believes new flood defences are vital to protect Yalding from the Medway and the Beult rivers when they burst their banks.

Currently, the only protection Yalding receives from flooding is the Leigh Barrier; a reservoir which funnels water away from the Medway and stores it to reduce the amount of water flowing down the river.

However, water levels were so high over the festive season it was powerless to prevent flooding.

"There are currently no flood defences on the Beult, so to build something similar to the Leigh Barrier would cost about £25million.

"To extend the height of the Leigh Barrier so it can take more water could cost millions more."

Among the worst hit areas was the Little Venice Caravan Park. Residents there were forced to abandon their homes with 50 having to be rescued by emergency services – some by boat.

As the water rose over Christmas Day and Boxing Day, roads and bridges around the village became blocked and unusable, trapping villagers but also making it harder for the emergency services to help

Caravan park director Andrew Godden explained: "The site was a mess. Fortunately most of the caravans have flotation units. I think we had 20 completely wrecked out of 125, so it could have been much worse.

"It was quite horrendous. The speed that the water came in was terrifying.

"The office was flooded so all the papers were ruined. The bar and the laundry rooms and other parts have got to be completely renovated.

"We are estimating the cost to us will be £100,000 and a lot of that isn't insured which we will have to cover ourselves."

Mr Godden also revealed that finally, a month on from the floods, the residents who live onsite full-time are all finally back in their homes.

He said: "There are a few families on site who are full residents and the rest of them have other home addresses but they came down to the park to spend Christmas there.

"Some of them live quite a long way away so they had to stay in hotels over Christmas until they could get back to the caravans, collect their things and go home."

One of the criticisms levelled at the current system is that it doesn't allow enough warning time for Yalding's residents to prepare their homes for the oncoming water.

It was on Christmas Eve morning that the scale of the drama began to unfold. The county woke up to find itself being battered by powerful storms which saw many left without power. Yalding was no different. But with the power out and the river waters rising ominously, the lack of power meant limited options to keep up-to-date with the threat they faced.

Mrs Brown explained that after mobile phone batteries drained – and with no ability to recharge them – she, and other members of the community, went around the village knocking on people's doors to warn the water was rising.

She said: "The power cut really did it for us. We couldn't get through to other people from our mobile phones to let them know that the flood was coming.

"I have an email system to about 200 people warning them, but not everybody was set up to receive them, especially at Little Venice."

It has since been suggested that in case of future electricity failure and communication difficulties, that an air-raid style siren should go off to warn the public.

Lib Dem county councillor, and Yalding resident, Rob Bird pushed the suggestion of a return to old warning systems in a KCC cabinet meeting.

He said: "Lives were put at risk during recent floods in Kent as a result of an inadequate warning system.

"KCC select committee inquiries following floods in 2000 and 2007 both recommended improvements to the system, including the use of sirens, but the lack of warnings were still a major cause of concern thirteen years later."

The councillor explained that a number of residents wouldn't leave their homes because only intermediate flood warnings were in place.

"Clearly, lives were put at risk as helicopters were subsequently required to help evacuate residents from the caravan park later that evening and from the centre of the village on Christmas Day," he said.

"The doors in the house are bowed and the walls are soaked. Much of my furniture was ruined and has had to be thrown in a skip. But I wasn't even one of the worst hit"

Geraldine Brown,
Yalding Parish Council chairman

starts villagers demand action



DAMAGE: Yalding and its residents suffered severely during the bad weather over the Christmas period and now the rebuilding work begins

There has also been criticism of the Environment Agency's warning system and the way it categorises which areas are going to flood.

Geraldine Brown said: "As it stands, the warning that the River Medway is at risk of flooding means that there is the same amount of risk to Maidstone as to Yalding. But that is clearly not true.

"We have been told that the Environment Agency is going to make its warnings more specific by warning which communities are at risk rather than just aiming their warning at a whole river."

The discussion of upgrades to flood defences and even the building of new facilities dominated a Kent County Council cabinet meeting at the end of January.

Paul Carter has agreed there should be research carried out for the future protection of the low lying land of Yalding as well as Tonbridge town centre, which was also badly flooded at Christmas time.

KCC will work together with the Environment Agency to conduct a feasibility study on possible upgrades to the Leigh Barrier and new defences for the Beult.

He said: "We have to put a scheme together for the future protection of Yalding in conjunction with the Environment Agency so we can approach government for funding.

"We are meeting the Environment Agency in a few days to look at some proposals. We can then do some costings and put pressure on government, who will have to be the significant contributor towards the scheme we propose, if we can get their agreement.

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WHAT IS THE LEIGH BARRIER?

SITUATED three miles south of Tonbridge, the barrier is a large storage reservoir.

It is able to cut the volume of water rushing through the River Medway by up to 50 per cent, protecting communities between Tonbridge and Yalding.

A gateway across the river can be closed off – similar to a sluice gate – which channels water into a piece of unused farm land that is surrounded by man-made banks to keep the water in.

The water can then be regulated and released slowly down the river. This normally prevents banks bursting.

However, some suggested the barrier was poorly utilised during the Christmas floods.

Andrew Godden, from Little Venice Caravan Park, said: ''We've heard from the Environment Agency that they didn't let a large body of water go, but the levels raised from six inches to five foot in 30 minutes. That's not a gentle flow.''

KCC leader Paul Carter agreed it needed closer examination: ''We need to talk with the agency on how we can improve on early warning flood systems and we also need to look at how the river levels were managed at the Leigh Barrier.''

The agency said it will be upgrading and maintaining the barrier in the coming years making it safe for another two decades.

A spokesman said: ''We are spending £5 million of capital investment on the flood storage area between 2014 and 2017. Many of the mechanical and electrical systems will be replaced, ensuring the reliability of the structure to 2035.''

Between December 24-27, over 5.5 million cubic metres of water were held back by the barrier.

According to the Environment Agency, this greatly reduced water levels on the River Medway and the extent of flooding in Tonbridge, as well as reducing water flows in the Medway through East Peckham, Yalding and other communities downstream.

A spokesman added: ''Without the Leigh Barrier and other flood defences, flooding would have been as bad as that seen in 1960 and 1968, when Tonbridge High Street was under six feet of water.''



BARRIER: The Leigh Barrier is an important part of the Environment Agency's defences

Timetable to drama

December 21: A wet run-up to Christmas was compounded by prolonged heavy rain.

December 23: A powerful storm swept across Kent overnight bringing with it torrential rain and wind. Some 90mm of rain fell onto already saturated ground.

December 24: Thousands woke across the county to power cuts in the aftermath of the storm. More ominously, the rain had nowhere to go and with the ground soaked the rivers began to swell.

December 25: Yalding, particularly vulnerable as it is the point where the Teise, Beult and Medway rivers join, saw the banks burst and water flood homes. A major rescue was implemented. Flooding also hit Maidstone, Tonbridge and Hildenborough, with hundreds affected.

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"However, we also need to ensure that the plans we produce will do the job they are designed for."

The Environment Agency confirmed it will be investigating options to stop the area flooding in the future.

A spokesman explained that since 2000, it has been working on strategic plans to reduce the flood risk in the River Medway's catchment area but is now looking to speed up the process after the Christmas overflow.

He said: "We have considered a number of potential schemes to reduce flooding in the village, including the construction of an additional flood storage area on the lower River Beult at a potential cost of £25m. Kent County Council has offered to co- fund a feasibility study with us.

"It has also been recommended that the Leigh flood storage area be raised by one metre in 2035, giving us an additional 30 per cent storage.

"The cost for this work is estimated to be £11m. This will reduce flood risk to properties in and around Tonbridge and cut the frequency of flooding for those who already benefit.

"We are investigating whether we could accelerate this project as a matter of urgency."

Prime Minister David Cameron visited Yalding during the floods and said lessons should be learned following the disaster and both KCC and the Environment Agency have put pressure on the Government to stump up the cash for flood defence upgrades.

However, both groups have said more cash needs to be contributed by local authorities and communities to get new flood schemes under way.

As a starting point, KCC is facing a bill of in excess of £3m. Paul Carter said: "The formula which prioritises flood schemes is highly complex and the more money that can be raised by other means towards the scheme, the better chance of success you have."

A spokesman for the Environment Agency added: "Both the additional flood storage area on the lower River Beult and Leigh Flood Storage Area schemes will require third party financial contributions.

"We are already working with Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and other partners to identify beneficiaries and partnership funding opportunities, which will increase the likelihood of the above works going ahead."

Concludes councillor Rob Bird: "We must look at what flood prevention we can have now. Not just for Yalding, but for Tonbridge, East Peckham and Wateringbury – the whole of the Medway valley.

"Can we get more capacity in the Leigh Barrier? Can we look at a water retention system for the Beult?

"The economic and social cost puts up a very strong argument for better flood prevention."







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Falling grammar results – are the selectives slipping?

Created to give bright pupils the best possible education, selective schools have always divided opinion but their academic excellence was never in doubt... until now. **Marijke Cox** reports

SINCE its advent in the middle of the last century, the modern grammar school system has continued to divide the nation.

Creaming off the top 25 per cent of the brightest pupils at the age of 11, supporters argue it enhances social mobility, allowing academically gifted children from all walks of life – most notably those from less advantaged backgrounds – the best possible state education alongside those of similar ability.

Critics, however, argue it stops equality of opportunity, preventing all children having the same standard of education while also labelling children a 'pass' or 'failure' at a young age.

To further muddy the waters, the Kent Test has become a serious bone of contention.

Private tuition in more affluent areas ahead of the 11-plus test has also thrown into doubt the social mobility pledge which sits at the heart of the grammar school ethos.

Nonetheless, one thing which remains undisputed is that selective schools produce results.

Year-on-year, they sit at the top of the league tables, with many seeing 100 per cent of their pupils achieving the national benchmark of five GCSEs at A*-C grade including English and maths.

Yet the latest official tables, based on the 2013 results, show signs some of these high achieving schools are slipping.

There is no suggestion of a systematic slump, yet nearly a third of the county's grammars saw their scores dip. In many cases it is by just one or two per cent, which will equate to perhaps one of two students. But some saw overall scores dip to almost one in ten students failing to reach the national benchmark.

Which begs the question, why, in a selective system, is this happening?

The finger of blame is naturally pointed at headteachers, staff and school governors.

But there are, according to education insiders, many other elements to take into account.

Kent's grammar schools, they suggest, are as varied as the county itself.

Deprivation in some areas and affluence in others, not to mention super-selective entry criteria at some schools, all make for a complex make-up in what, in theory, should be a simple selection process based on academic ability.

It means, claim some within the grammar system, that the national benchmark is perhaps too rigid a measure for schools which are in essence quite different from each other despite displaying the grammar school stamp. Ironically, it is an almost identical argument used by many of the poorer performing high schools. So what is the truth?

Education consultant Peter Read, of Kent Independent Education Advice, believes that with the pick of the county's brightest children, those slipping beneath the 98 per cent mark of children gaining the national standard, have no excuses.

Particularly, he says, since more than 60 per cent of Kent children overall – including non-selective schools – achieved the benchmark last year.

"The reason I give that 98 per cent figure is to take into account children with illness or if there are exceptional circumstances why they are not up to the mark," he said.

"But let's look at schools under 96 per cent instead. That means nine of the 33 grammar schools are under that figure.

"Given the county average of 60 per cent, I see no excuse for any grammar to score less than 96 per cent.

"Folkestone School for Girls, year on year, sees 100 per cent of its pupils getting the benchmark. I can't comprehend how other grammars get under 96 per cent.

"The responsibility lies with the school; the headteacher and governors. They can't really complain about their intake can they?

"These schools are failing children who ought to be getting five GCSEs at A*-C with English and maths."

Simon Langton School for Boys in Canterbury scored the lowest of all Kent grammars with 91 per cent of pupils achieving the standard in last summer's exams.

More worryingly, this number has dropped from 98 per cent since 2010.

Mr Read told KoS his theory: "I

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think they are focusing on the top end pupils and not the bottom end and are failing the basic concept that every boy in that grammar ought to be getting five GCSEs including maths and English.

"Dane Court in Broadstairs – they got 93 per cent – that's not acceptable.

"It may be the same theory as Simon Langton for Boys in that there is more focus on the top pupils and others get left behind.

"Look at Sir Roger Manwood's in Sandwich – a school with prestige – which is only on 93 per cent. I don't think it's acceptable."

His concerns were supported by education chiefs in the county, who admitted some grammars had not performed as highly as hoped despite having the brightest pupils.







TESTED: Dartford MP Gareth Johnson, KCC Ukip leader Roger Latchford and KCC cabinet member Roger Gough

But headteachers defended the results with Dane Court Grammar School executive head Paul Luxmoore putting it down to the diversity of the county's selective system.

Some of the schools, for example, are located in deprived areas with a higher number of children on free school meals (an indicator of poverty) and with mental health problems.

"Grammar schools are massively different from each other," he said.

"Dane Court in Thanet is very different from the Judd School in Tonbridge.

"While both schools are selective, the ability levels are different.

"The Judd School, for instance, is super-selective whereas Dane Court takes children who have passed the 11-plus but also give priority on their distance from the school and whether they have siblings there.

"So, within Kent, the nature of grammar schools vary."

He also pointed out the difference between west Kent and Thanet in terms of pupil numbers.

"In west Kent, grammar schools are over-subscribed whereas in Thanet there are 90 more places than there are selective children. There are not enough selective children to fill those places."

He stressed, however, that Dane Court didn't have problems filling its own spaces.

In other Thanet grammar schools, though, a higher proportion of pupils are taken on through appeal, where the children did not actually pass the Kent Test but were deemed capable of attending selective education, to fill up places.

Mr Luxmoore continued: "I equate Dane Court to a mixed comprehensive. It's a lovely grammar school but if you compare it to others in more well-off areas, it's different.

"It's just impossible to make a comparison between the schools."

He admitted he was "frustrated" by his school's 93 per cent result – amounting to around 10 students not meeting the benchmark – stating he wanted that 100 per cent mark.

But he stressed it was unfair to criticise schools when they vary so much socially. He said: "The five A*-C including English and maths is a very arbitrary measure. It's hard to see the whole picture.

"There will be a number of children who are from particularly difficult backgrounds, or on free school meals and we have more mental health issues and so getting all of the Year 11 pupils to reach this benchmark is more challenging than for other selective schools."

What's evident from speaking to headteachers is the clear contempt for government league tables.

Historically, both selective and non-selective schools have derided the system as a crude measure of achievement, not least those who find themselves at the bottom of the tables.

Headteachers argue that instead of looking at the five A*-C including English and maths, a much more important assessment is looking at the progress a child makes from the time they start school to when they leave. This is particularly relevant with Kent's high schools, who have those deemed capable of accelerated learning removed to attend a grammar.

So much criticism has been heaped on league tables, in fact, that schools minister David Laws spoke out in Parliament last year calling for reform.

> **"The bottom line is you don't pay any regard to league tables. We look at the destination of our students; where the school has allowed them to go"**
>
> **Ken Moffat,**
> Simon Langton School for Boys

He stated the current system meant schools across the board often "focused excessively" on higher achieving and middling pupils to ensure they get the benchmark standard while lower attaining pupils fell behind.

Mr Laws said such stringent targets also encouraged schools to offer a narrow curriculum.

One of the key measures he called for was for pupils' progress to be measured across eight GCSE subjects.

"We will also look at including a destination measure to show the percentage of pupils who move on to further study or employment, including further training," he said.

This last measure is particularly relevant for Simon Langton School for Boys. Head of school Ken Moffat said the Canterbury grammar sees the highest number of pupils going to Oxford and Cambridge universities than anywhere else in the county.

He questioned how the school



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could be criticised for only gaining 91 per cent in the league tables when it was clearly achieving when based on the destination of its students once leaving sixth form.

"The bottom line is you don't pay any regard to league tables. They are a necessary but insufficient measure of progress," said Mr Moffat.

"We look at the destination of our students; where the school has allowed them to go.

"We look between Year 11 and 13 and where they go on after school. Using a football analogy, we're interested in what the full time score is.

"We have the highest number of students going to Oxford and Cambridge. Last year there were 20 and this year 16.

"Too many grammar schools see hot-housing of bright students.

"But it's not just A-level results universities are interested in. It's everything else that you do with it."

He stressed the school had many different projects which had nothing to do with exams but instead focused on broadening experiences.

"We're working with Nasa to send a rocket into space next year and we're conducting research into multiple sclerosis," he said.

"You don't go into a classroom for any of this – they've got nothing to do with examinations.

"When pupils turn up for an interview, interviewers are after something else that makes them stand out from the other contenders."

Pressed on the 91 per cent, he stressed that sometimes when a pupil achieves less it can give them the "wake up call" to work harder.

Asked whether he believes grammar schools differ across the county, he admitted he wouldn't necessarily compare Canterbury with Thanet.

Dane Court's Mr Luxmoore said he was pleased changes were planned for league tables to see other subjects, such as science and languages, taken into account.

"I think five A* to C grades is a bad measure for grammar schools. We have large numbers of children who get more than five GCSEs; 12 or 13 GCSEs," he said.

"To compare grammar schools with this arbitrary measure is not efficient. Ofsted doesn't measure us on that, it measures on the progress that we make. I'm not saying it's perfect but it's a better way."

Cabinet member for education at Kent County Council, Roger Gough, admitted there were some grammars that did not score as highly as he might have hoped.

"Given that grammar schools are selective we would expect them to shoot for a high academic outcome and therefore those that do fall short, we question whether there is something we need to look at," he told KoS.

"Grammar schools, by and large, start with children who come in on the higher end of the attainment level.

"While there is always a variation in relation to overall performance, on average, they are starting from a relatively strong position."

He said, however, there were some elements which could make a difference between grammar schools.

"We don't have a uniform admissions criteria in Kent," he said.

"We have some super-selectives and some with additional tests like in Dover. I think there is a variation.

"Nonetheless, they are based on academic selection and should be achieving the results."

He said the authority was always "ready and willing" to work with schools where things can be done better.

This is despite two-thirds being academies and therefore run independently from local education authority control.

"To some extent it's very much up to them – the academies – whether they accept our help. Most do and we look to help that school," he said.

Cllr Gough says progression in schools is important as well as the destinations of pupils after leaving, such as how many go to Russell Group universities, which include the nation's best performing seats of learning.

He stressed that league tables tell only one part of a bigger picture.

He added: "I must say overall we had very good results across our GCSEs, and grammar schools on the whole contributed to that.

"There are those that are further away from the 100 per cent mark, but you have to look at it in the context of other things, so progression and destination, for example."

Grammar schools are supported by Conservatives and Ukip, with both parties pushing to see a satellite selective school set up in Sevenoaks – the only district in Kent not to have one.

Leader of the opposition at KCC, Roger Latchford, a former grammar pupil and Ukip councillor, said it was his party's policy to see a grammar in every town.

"It is an opportunity for young people who come from less privileged backgrounds who are academically gifted, to be able to enter the professional world," he said.

"It's for poorer families who can't send their children to public schools.

"As to what we can do to keep standards up? Every grammar school is a reflection of the headteacher.

"It is challenging for them, but it is the responsibility of headteachers to bring standards up."

He disputed the argument that it was harder for grammars in Thanet to reach targets.

"The students that are there realise the impact of being there. They value the fact they have a place in that school," he said.

But he stressed the grammar schools he has visited were "brilliant".

Questioned on league tables, he admitted he didn't like them.

"Publishing league tables I don't think is a catalyst for improvement.

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SPOTLIGHT ON MEDWAY GRAMMAR SCHOOL RESULTS

IN Medway, St Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School in Rochester achieved 100 per cent, followed closely by Rochester Grammar and Fort Pitt with 99 per cent.

Again, like in Kent, some grammars dropped in the tables, with Rainham Mark dropping from 98 per cent to 96 per cent and Chatham Grammar for Boys 100 per cent to 96 per cent. Chatham Grammar School for Boys was last year issued with an inadequate grading from Ofsted inspectors – only the second grammar school in the country to receive this low rating.

The knock came after the academy saw 100 per cent of its pupils gain five A*-C including English and maths in the 2013 league tables.

It goes to support claims the league tables do not tell the full story.

The school's leadership and management came under fire because achievement "had not improved quickly enough" since a previous inspection and inspectors highlighted "weak and inadequate" teaching and achievement of students was not "consistently good".

The then-headteacher retired and a new senior leadership team was parachuted in to rapidly make improvements.

This year's set of GCSE results showed a four per cent drop to 96 per cent.

Chatham Grammar School for Girls dropped from 95 per cent to 94 per cent.

But lead portfolio holder for children's services at Medway Council, Mike O'Brien, said there was much to celebrate in Medway schools.

He too put the spotlight on league tables.

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"It can make students and schools feel inadequate.

"There is a need for league tables but they should be confidential to the education authorities to take action."

Tory MP for Dartford, and former grammar pupil, Gareth Johnson is another strong supporter of the grammar school system.

"I think the issue with grammar schools in Kent is they are so high achieving," he said, "it takes just one or two students for whatever reason not to get the target for it to have an impact on their figures.

"But I think it would be unfair to overly criticise any school."

He added: "The worst kind of education would be a one-size-fits-all system. Grammar schools might not be for everyone but they help some children enormously."

Mr Johnson also supports more grammar schools, stating it would stop the "bun fight" for places where that exists.

Undoubtedly, grammar schools do benefit many pupils and even those on the lower end of the scale are still hitting the targets.

Yet the debate over the impact of a selective system on our children and education system will continue. And with grammars painting themselves as the epitome of academic success centres, there is an expectation – and given the selective system – a demand for them to deliver exam success.

■ What do you think? Share your view. Write to: The Editor, KoS, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford TN25 6SS or email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.

The number of children gaining five A*-C grades including English and maths at GCSE

Kent (%)	2010	2011	2012	2013	Three-year average
The Folkestone School for Girls	98	100	100	100	100
Invicta Grammar School	100	99	100	100	100
Maidstone Grammar School for Girls	98	98	99	100	99
The Skinners' School	100	100	99	100	100
Tonbridge Grammar School	99	100	100	100	100
Barton Court Grammar School	96	100	98	99	99
Dartford Grammar School	99	100	98	99	99
Dartford Grammar School for Girls	99	99	98	99	99
Gravesend Grammar School	98	98	100	99	99
Highsted Grammar School	99	99	99	99	99
Highworth Grammar School	99	99	98	99	99
The Judd School	98	100	100	99	100
Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School	98	100	99	99	100
Weald of Kent Grammar School	98	99	99	99	99
Mayfield Grammar School, Gravesend	99	99	99	98	99
Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School	98	98	98	98	98
Dover Grammar School for Girls	99	98	99	97	98
Maidstone Grammar School	99	98	97	97	97
Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys	97	97	98	97	97
The Harvey Grammar School	96	96	99	96	97
Simon Langton Girls' Grammar	99	99	96	96	97
Wilmington Grammar for Boys	95	95	100	96	97
Wilmington Grammar for Girls	97	98	95	96	96
Oakwood Park Grammar School	99	97	99	95	97
Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School	94	95	86	94	92
Dane Court Grammar School	97	94	92	94	93
The Norton Knatchbull School	92	99	94	94	95
Clarendon House Grammar School	97	95	94	93	94
Sir Roger Manwood's School	95	95	97	93	95
Borden Grammar School	92	96	92	92	93
Dover Grammar School for Boys	92	90	91	92	91
Simon Langton Grammar for Boys	98	95	95	91	94
Medway (%)					
Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School	99	99	99	100	99
Fort Pitt Grammar School	99	100	98	99	99
The Rochester Grammar School	99	99	100	99	99
Chatham Grammar School for Boys	97	95	100	96	97
Rainham Mark Grammar School	98	99	98	96	98
Chatham Grammar School for Girls	98	98	95	94	96



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MEDIEVAL MERRIMENT: England's premier historic jester Peterkin, pictured left, and The Crystal Wizard, right, will be entertaining visitors to Leeds Castle

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Airline ditches the glamour in favour of a stress-free journey

By Joe Bill
joe.bill@archant.co.uk





EASE: The service from Manston to Schiphol offers travellers a slick, quick service and 90 destinations worldwide

HEARD of the airport where you don't have to arrive two hours before your flight and where the process of walking from your car to the aircraft itself is no more than a few hundred yards?

Manston may have a record of miserable failure when it comes to offering passenger flights, and be about as attractive as a glorified shed, but there is no denying that when it comes to making life easier for the weary traveller, it has a few trump cards.

Granted, those trump cards are really only for the good folk of east Kent for whom the airport is very much on their doorsteps.

Hate the Russian roulette which comes with having to factor in the M25 when it comes to your travel plans? Well, this is an alternative.

It is, however, somewhat limited in its options. After failing to engage the public in other passenger services, Dutch firm KLM took the plunge last April with a limited service to Amsterdam.

The chances are it will not be alone for long since Manston was taken over by Ann Gloag, the woman who helped start the Stagecoach empire, at the end of last year and who clearly has ambitions to make it a key cog in the south east's transport network.

For now, though, it is a picture of modesty. KLM currently offers just two flight options to Holland and two to return.

But it takes you to Schiphol, the sort of international airport which makes Boris Johnson come over all weak at the knees: Because from there, once you navigate the enormous terminal, the idea is you leap onto a connecting flight which whisks you wherever in the world you'd like to go.

So just what can you expect when you head to Manston? Firstly, the car park is just a few yards from the terminal itself – a low-level building which offers little more than a cafe and small duty-free shop as pre-flight entertainment.

Secondly, because there's no big queues you're only expected to arrive an hour before your plane heads to the skies. And there is no need for a bus from terminal to plane either. It's just a short walk across the tarmac to the KLM City Hopper.

Without having to wait for other flights, getting airborne is swift...and no sooner are you levelling out, the captain is advising you about the descent.

From runway to runway took just 35 minutes on the way out and just 29 on the return flight. Benefit from a tailwind and the journey time has been clocked at a mere 19 minutes.

From modest Manston you emerge into spectacular Schiphol. A huge sprawling complex that caters for around a million international passengers a week, serving some 90 worldwide destinations.

Much of the process is automated and the facilities are absolutely vast. There is everything from hotel rooms to spas and even a casino.

It also houses a train station downstairs. For eight Euros and 15 minutes of your time, the train will take you right into the heart of Amsterdam's bustling city. Or catch another to different locations across Europe.

The city is an engaging destination, with its architecture and canals making it a genuine day-trip option.

Chief executive of Manston Airport Charles Buchanan is faced with the task of trying to awaken a population still showing signs of failing to fully embrace the opportunities it presents.

As we stroll the streets of Amsterdam he explains: "We want to show that you can take off from Manston at 10am and be in central Amsterdam by 11.30am. It is no distance at all, yet you can also see the destinations available at Schiphol, from Bombay to Washington and everywhere else."

Manston may not have the glitz and glamour of the latest restaurants and high street shops sitting in its terminal, but it does exactly what it says on the tin.

It's quick, convenient and while not as sumptuous as its rivals, the trade off is no M25 and no big queues. And that sounds like a good deal to me.

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Developer of £85m shops' expansion fights back





THREAT?: The new-look Newnham Court won't not harm Maidstone High Street says Chris Ward of Land Securities

By Marijke Cox
marijke.cox@archant.co.uk

THE developer behind £85m plans to revamp a popular Maidstone shopping complex has hit back at claims the ambitious scheme will threaten the future growth of the town centre.

It follows warnings by critics the redeveloped Newnham Court Shopping Village, located on the outskirts of the town near junction seven of the M20, will drive shoppers away from the county town's high street.

Other town centres in Kent, such as Margate in Thanet, have undoubtedly suffered from out-of-town shopping complexes such as Westwood Cross and fears are the same could occur in Maidstone.

But Land Securities, the developer behind the plans, has come out fighting saying the transformation of the shopping village, which is home to Notcutts garden centre, will not stop strong retail growth for high street traders.

Instead, the firm says a failure to invest will see Maidstone lose out to developments planned at rival outlets such as Bluewater, McArthur Glen in Ashford and other shopping hotspots in the county.

"It's frustrating to hear unfounded and inaccurate comments about our scheme posing a threat to the town centre," said development director Chris Ward.

"The very real threat to the future economic prosperity of Maidstone actually comes from what is being planned at rival shopping places nearby.

"Bluewater is set to grow by 20 per cent, while McArthur Glen wants to expand the Ashford designer outlet by 150,000 sq ft, nearly doubling its size.

"A multi-million-pound expansion of retail facilities at Tunbridge Wells is proposed, while only last week a huge investment scheme was announced at Kingsmead in Canterbury.

"We are not the enemy, other towns in Kent are. They will steal trade from Maidstone by offering better shopping facilities and more choice."

Land Securities plans to transform the shopping village, creating 1,500 jobs locally.

At the heart of the scheme will be a 62,000sq ft Debenhams store, a 29,000sq ft Waitrose and an enlarged and revamped Notcutts alongside other retailers and restaurants.

Mr Ward insists the scheme will not harm the retail sector and pointed to what he called a legally-binding dual trading pledge.

"We have undertaken not to allow any retailer already present in Maidstone town centre to occupy space at Newnham Court," he said.

"The only exceptions will be where the retailer in question intends to open a second store in the town and to keep its existing store open."

Addressing concerns that town centre retailers will suffer, he said research showed trading in Maidstone is forecast to grow by £70m by 2018, with £50m of that in the town centre.

Maidstone Borough Council is expected to make a decision on the planning application within the next two months.

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County's first mosque with classic dome all set to open

The iconic design of the Islamic temple of worship has come to a modest terraced street in Medway to serve an ever-increasing Muslim population. Opening next month, we sent **Joe Bill** to find out more...

THERE are dozens of mosques well established in the county, but for the first time the traditional dome and minaret familiar with the building will pierce the county's skyline.

Set among the terraced houses of Richmond Road in Gillingham, the Nasir mosque will officially open next month, becoming the first purpose built facility in the county.

Currently, existing mosques in Kent are sited within converted buildings; taking on the role as a place of worship.

Dr Zahid Khan, who works in nearby Wigmore, is the spokesman for the new building.

He explained: "The building was the former Liberal club until it was transformed into a prayer hall in the 1970s. But it needed to be completely gutted. About 95 per cent of the building is new, only a few of the exterior walls are actually the same.

"The dome and minaret have been significant to our house of God for centuries. So from a distance you will see it's a mosque, just like you would with a church. It's a specific shape.

"There are many mosques in Kent of course, but as far as I am aware there are none with a dome or minaret."

Islam is one of the world's fastest growing religions and the number of followers in the county continues to increase.

It is estimated some 5,200 Muslims live in the Medway towns, around two per cent of the total population.

The numbers may appear small, but it makes the religion the second largest after Christianity.

The newly-built Nasir mosque was created by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association (AMA)– a particular sect of the religion which hails from the small village of Qadian in India in 1889, but has since spread to 150 million members around the world.

At its heart are the teachings of the holy prophet Hadhrat Muhammad.

With 250 members settled in the Medway area, the AMA has grown significantly. But why Gillingham?

"There is a reason why members of this faith settled here," Dr Khan explains.

"In 1964, Kenya was granted its independence from Britain and my family and others were all British citizens with passports.

"So my father made the choice to come to Britain, because his children were growing up and education was going to be an important thing."

It was in fact the Chatham Dockyard that drew Dr Khan's family to Medway

He added: "My father already had a friend here who told him that Gillingham was a place were you could come, get employment and get your children educated. So they were the reasons we came.

> **"The motto of our community encompasses all we do; love for all, hatred for none. If our neighbours have any questions about our religion they can ask us"**
>
> **Sheik Naseer Ahmad,**
> President, Kent branch of the AMA

And many people followed on that advice. Gillingham was also cheaper than London to settle down in but not far away."

But for all the messages of peace and understanding contained within the pages of Islam's holy text, the Quran, the actions of a minority of extremists continue to generate negative headlines, and in doing so create friction and a xenophobic streak within local communities, which breeds fear and resentment.

So could the new mosque, a very visible sign of Islam, create problems?

"No," says Dr Khan, "we have never had any problems in this area.

"I have lived here in Gillingham since 1964. I grew up here, went to school in Rochester and own a dental practice nearby."

Tensions are not unknown in the area, however.

In May last year, following the brutal slaying of Lee Rigby on the streets of Greenwich, there were a flurry of incidents nationwide against

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NASIR MOSQUE: The new building has been paid for by local members of the AMA
Picture: ADY KERRY

this place of worship as this will help strengthen the already very strong ties that are in place across all communities within Medway."

Just 57 per cent of Medway's population classed themselves as Christian in the 2011 census compared with 72 per cent in 2001.

Archdeacon Paul Wright, the Bishop of Rochester's adviser for inter-faith concerns, hopes the Christian Church and the Muslim society in Medway can work together to better the community.

He said: "Clearly the opening of a purpose-built mosque in Gillingham is a sign of the growing diversity across Medway and beyond. As part of the Christian Church we clearly appreciate the important resource a building can be for any worshipping community.

"All faith communities have a significant contribution to make and I hope that the local churches will be able to develop ways of working with the Muslim community that gather here, and I wish them well in their endeavours."

"There is always a call to prayer but it will done inside, so you won't be able to hear it from outside. The minaret is more of an aesthetic feature in this building"

Dr Zahid Khan,
Spokeman for the mosque

The minaret of a mosque is traditionally used as a tower to call Muslims to prayer. Familiar to anyone who has holidayed in a Muslim country, the call to prayer is normally broadcast over loudspeakers. This will not, however, be the case in Gillingham.

Dr Khan said: "There is always a call to prayer but it will done inside, so you won't be able to hear it from outside. The minaret is more of an aesthetic feature in this building.

"A mosque can be of any design in Islam. We know that the first mosque in Islam in Medina at the time of the Prophet Mohammed was just a thatched building.

"A mosque is defined as a place where people can gather for prayers but as time has evolved the design has brought forward the minaret."

Members of the Kent branch of the AMA contributed £450,000 to create the Nasir mosque which comes complete with prayer room, community rooms, disabled access and new kitchens.

Dr Khan said: "All of our funding is done by local members. We are not sponsored by any political party or government or foreign body.

Any activities that we conduct here in Gillingham are funded on a voluntary basis by our members.

"They donate whatever they can and the enthusiasm for these types of projects is always there."

The official opening of the mosque will take place in early March to mark the 50th anniversary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community establishing itself in Kent.

It will include a visit from His Holiness Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad – the supreme head of the worldwide AMA.

WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

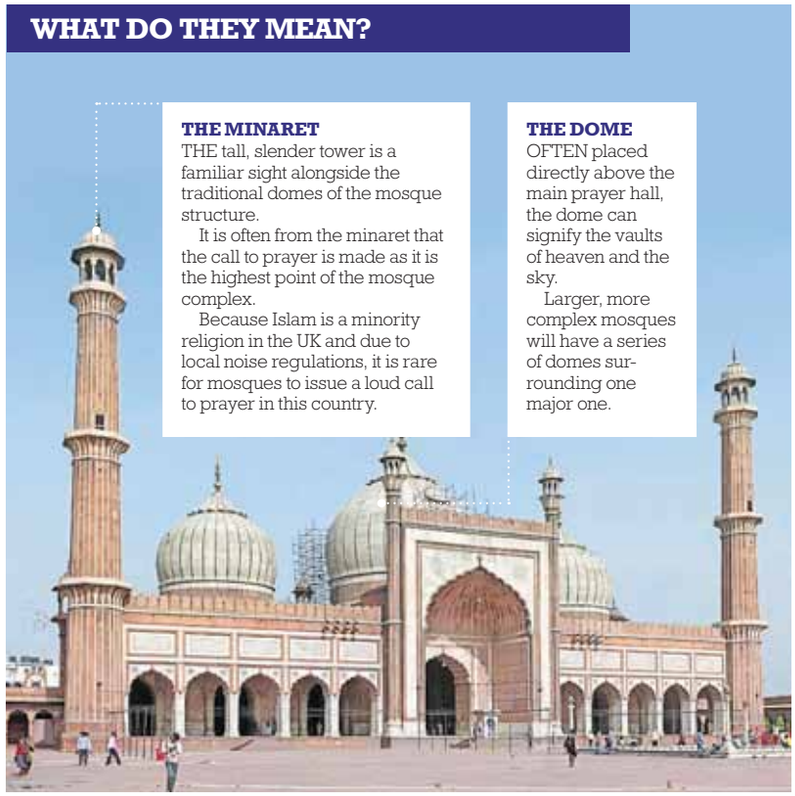
THE MINARET
THE tall, slender tower is a familiar sight alongside the traditional domes of the mosque structure.

It is often from the minaret that the call to prayer is made as it is the highest point of the mosque complex.

Because Islam is a minority religion in the UK and due to local noise regulations, it is rare for mosques to issue a loud call to prayer in this country.

THE DOME
OFTEN placed directly above the main prayer hall, the dome can signify the vaults of heaven and the sky.

Larger, more complex mosques will have a series of domes surrounding one major one.



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Pictures: NICK VEASEY



LAID BARE: X-rays reveal the utilitarian nature of some of the world's most famous weapons

X-rays strip away mystique of host of killer weapons

Art project exposes inner workings of some of the world's most famous guns, **Chris Murphy** reports

HERE'S a very different look at some of the world's most famous weapons.

These are just some of a series of special X-rays taken by artist Nick Veasey, from Maidstone, as part of a project to expose their inner workings.

The result is a series of incredibly detailed internal inspections of guns.

He said each weapon, when stripped of its external shell, reveals the intriguing mechanics of firing bullets in a way that is both sinister yet sensational.

He said: "These guns are killing machines. They wreak devastation.

"Each one has unique characteristics, but the end result is constant. While there is variety and refinement in the execution of their principal function, they are all the harbingers of death.

"Yet, while the pictures are disturbing, they are at the same time fascinating. There is no other inanimate mechanical object that reaches our psyche so dramatically."

He intended to use the clinical scientific X-ray scans to invigorate the debate about firearms.

He said: "We are met with an immediate impression of their function; the subject is elegantly laid bare before us.

"It is obviously human intervention that animates the inanimate. Man pulls the trigger."

The series is made up of iconic guns including the Walther PPK complete with silencer, made famous by James Bond, the Uzi, AK47 and the Thompson sub machine gun.

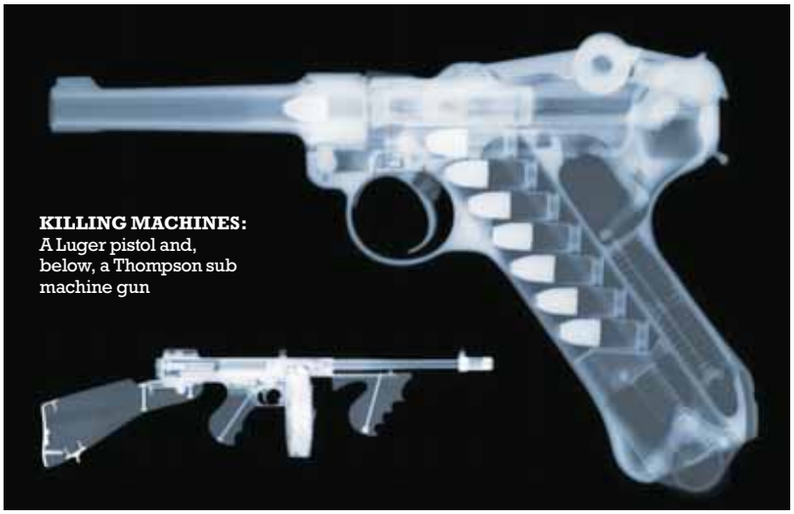
While the bigger machine guns are startling in their power, both visually and physically, the X-ray that lingers is the Uzi, said the artist.

This compact, fast-firing firearm looks comparatively simple and sedate.

Mr Veasey adds: "Guns are not my favourite things.

"A close friend lost her teenage son due to a gun. I wanted to make a series that comes together to highlight the utilitarian function of the weapons and remove any associated perceived 'glorification'.

"The X-rays show them for what they essentially are – devices for maiming and killing."



KILLING MACHINES: A Luger pistol and, below, a Thompson sub machine gun



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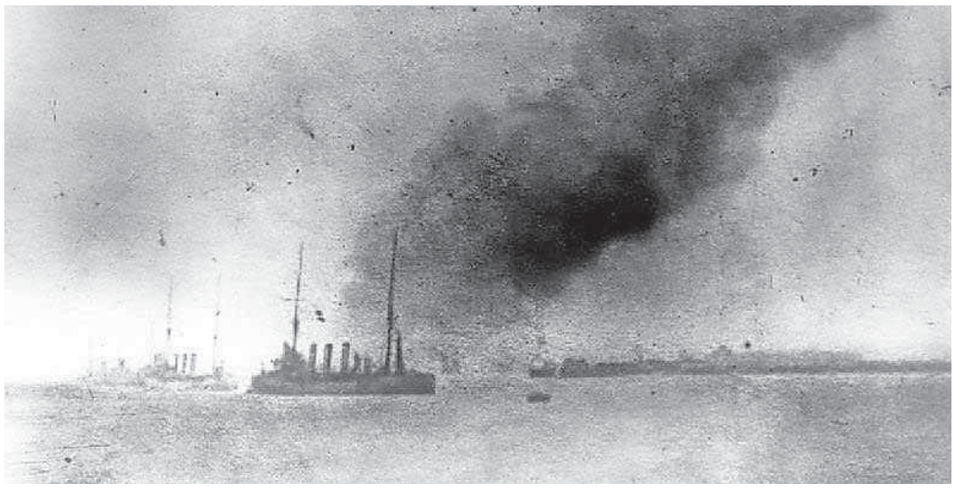
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Dark morning 736 sailors lost their lives off our coast

As thoughts turn to the centenary of the First World War, **Joe Bill** looks at the little-known story of HMS Bulwark – the battleship which blew up in the mouth of the River Medway...



ILL-FATED: An Imperial War Museum photograph of HMS Bulwark exploding and , below, before the accident



AMID all the tales of heroism and tragedy during the great conflicts of the 20th century, it is perhaps those from the First World War which risk becoming lost to the history books and stripped of their emotional clout.

And with 2014 marking the centenary of the start of the First World War, the story of battleship HMS Bulwark is one known by very few.

Yet it is perhaps Kent's most horrific disaster, with more than 700 souls perishing in one dreadful night.

HMS Bulwark had been built between 1899 and 1902 and had played an active role in the Navy. Refitted at Chatham in 1911, she had been called into action as the Great War began to patrol the Channel.

On the morning of November 26, 1914, she had been positioned in the mouth of the River Medway as a defence against a German invasion.

She was moored on a buoy at Kethole Reach, some four miles off the coast of Sheerness.

The 15,000-tonne London-class battleship was taking on coal from the airbase at Kingsnorth ahead of going out on patrol.

A crew of 750 men were serving on HMS Bulwark. They had been given leave to go ashore the day before, all returning to resume their duties at 7am.

As they sat in the mess eating breakfast and preparing for the day ahead an enormous explosion ripped through the ship.

It was so ferocious that eye-witnesses said, as the smoke cleared, it appeared as though the ship had completely disappeared.

Fragments of the wreckage were said to have been propelled as far as a mile away from the site of the explosion, which could be heard in Whitstable to the east and Southend to the north.

Some even suggested it shook the very foundations of Southend Pier.

Sheerness and Rainham took the brunt of the shockwaves, with damage to property being reported by many residents as well as debris falling in the streets.

While sailors and other vessels scrambled to form a rescue attempt, the question on everyone's lips was just what had caused this catastrophic explosion?

Rumours ran rife that a periscope had been sighted and HMS Bulwark was the victim of a submarine attack.

Others suggested German espionage.

The truth was somewhat more mundane.

An inquiry into the disaster found the most likely cause of the blast to be the overheating of explosive cordite charges stored too close to a boiler room.

It was suggested this caused a chain reaction in detonating the ship's stored ammunition and shells.

In total, it is believed that 736 people died in the blast. Of the 14 that survived, two later died of their wounds at the Royal Naval Hospital in Chatham.

Addressing the House of Commons, First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, said: "I regret to say I have some bad news for the House. The Bulwark battleship, which was lying in Sheerness this morning, blew up at 7.35.

> **"Rumours ran rife that a periscope had been sighted and HMS Bulwark was the victim of a submarine attack. Others suggested German espionage. The truth was somewhat more mundane."**

"There was apparently no upheaval in the water, and the ship had entirely disappeared when the smoke had cleared away.

"The loss of the ship does not sensibly affect the military position, but I regret to say the loss of life is very severe.

"I think the House would wish me to express on their behalf the deep sorrow with which the House heard the news, and their sympathy with those who have lost their relatives and friends."

Naval divers searching for the wreckage a few days later were only able to find two large fragments of the wreckage – part of the starboard bow and part of the port bow.

Only 82 bodies of the men on board were found, the majority of which were unidentifiable.

Woodlands Cemetery in Gillingham is home to the graves of the men lost on HMS Bulwark. Twelve lie in individual graves and have been named. The rest now reside in a large communal grave dedicated to the disaster.

Those bodies that were identified were done so by cook's mate William Frederick Cooper. He had been ill in the days running up the explosion and was on shore leave when disaster struck.

Survivors were few. Able Seaman Stephen Marshall told reporters that he was sitting on the deck of the Bulwark when the explosion occurred.

He was blown high into the air by the force of the blast and clear of the debris. Despite leg injuries he managed to swim to the wreckage and keep himself afloat until he was rescued.

None of the Bulwark's officers survived; although 11 of them were recovered for eventual burial. It is also believed that four of the crew on board were aged under-16 at the time.

In the weeks following the disaster several more bodies washed up on the surrounding beaches and even a chest of drawers from the battleship was found in a nearby marsh.

In terms of loss of life, the HMS Bulwark incident remains the second most devastating accidental explosion in the history of the United Kingdom's naval fleet. It is exceeded only by the explosion of the dreadnought battleship Vanguard at Scapa Flow near the Orkney Islands in 1917.

Those who died should not be forgotten.



SUNK: The SS Richard Montgomery's masts are visible to passing vessels

American cargo ship sunk in 1944 remains ticking time bomb off county's north coast

THE scene of the tragedy is close to where the remains of the SS Richard Montgomery now lie.

The American cargo ship ran aground off the coast of Sheppey in 1944 as it carried supplies needed during for the war effort.

It went down with some 1,400 tonnes of explosives on board.

But things could have been worse. When she initially left Philadelphia to cross the Atlantic, SS Richard Montgomery did so with more than 6,000 tonnes of ammunition on board.

When she sank a mission to salvage her cargo began before the boat's hull split in two, leaving the remains.

The ship, to this day, remains a ticking time bomb which threatens a large area of the north Kent coast.

Surrounded by warning buoys, her mast is visible in the water where she lays on a sand bank.

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WEATHERED: Bedgebury Pinetum, seen here in blue skies, has lost some 65 of its residents including an aged spruce but has plenty of the next generation of trees ready to take their places

Woodlands counting the cost of relentless storms

The severe weather battering the county has left the ground sodden and weakened the roots of many trees leaving them extremely vulnerable. **Chris Murphy** speaks to tree and woodland experts to find out what damage has been suffered and how they are dealing with it...

A TREE more than 160-years-old was one of hundreds across the county to fall victim to the storms which have wreaked havoc in recent weeks.

And while the county continues to be battered by high winds and heavy rains, leaving the ground sodden and weakening the roots of trees, forestry managers are busy assessing the damage caused to our woodlands.

Trees were brought down across the county with many blocking roads and rail tracks, and causing damage to homes and gardens.

But it was across our woodlands where the real impact of the weather was felt.

At the national conifer collection at Bedgebury Pinetum, near Tunbridge Wells, over 65 specimens were lost; the oldest and largest of these being a 160-year-old spruce, measuring a hefty three-feet across.

Bedgebury manager Dominic Robinson said: "Over 10 per cent of our tree collection are species that are threatened with extinction globally, so it is always sad to see the passing of such mighty trees.

"However, we have an evolving landscape, and within our nursery here at Bedgebury, we have the next generation ready to plant out and take their place."

Visitors to Bedgebury can be assured of a safe visit, said officials.

> **"The good news is trees blown over will become an important habitat for wildlife in the long term, as dead wood is valuable for a number of species"**
>
> **Clive Steward,** Woodland Trust site manager

Surveys have been carried out and all dangerous trees found at the site have been cleared.

Some fallen trees have been left to break down, and become an important habitat for wildlife.

Overall, say site chiefs, the impact at the pinetum in recent weeks has been minimised because many of the valuable trees have been pruned, or had crowns reduced, to mitigate against the impacts of wind damage.

But the situation continues to evolve as the poor weather continues, with further heavy rain and wind threatening trees across the county.

The Woodland Trust said its site managers are still assessing the situation in their respective areas, but have already reported damage.

A spokesman said the damage was not devastating, but that some sites were worse hit than others. Some, they say, have been badly affected.

Across Kent, the trust manages 30 woods, and the site managers ensure that following any major weather event, on-site checks are carried out to assess damage caused and the work needed, if necessary, to make sites safe for visitors.

Ashenbank Wood, near Cobham, was the most damaged wood on the Woodland Trust's estates, with three veteran trees blown down, one aged hornbeam badly damaged, and a couple of smaller trees blown over too.

Hucking Estate, near Hollingbourne, also had three trees blown down along the woodland edge, the most significant being a veteran ash tree.

Packing Wood, near Hamstreet, is one which the trust is currently restoring.

An ancient woodland planted with conifers, it is these the trust are gradually removing to allow ancient ground flora to recover.

The site suffered some damage to its conifers and a small number of chestnut coppice stems blew down across public rights of way.

Clive Steward, Woodland Trust site manager, said: "Our first priority is to ensure any trees which could provide a risk to visitors are dealt with as soon as possible, likewise those that obstruct routes around the wood.

"The good news is that trees which are blown over will become an even more important habitat for wildlife in the long term, as dead wood is incredibly valuable for a large number of species of wildlife.

"So where possible we will leave dead trees where they lie."

The trust is still assessing what, and how many, trees have been left in a precarious state and will need felling at a later stage.

The spokesman said the management of woodland is a constantly evolving job that requires on-going monitoring.

Kent County Council and Medway Council continue to respond to reports of trees falling across roads or in dangerous states.

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« PAGE 33

High winds and storms keep our tree surgeons very busy

IT MAY have been miserable for most of us, but it's been great weather for ducks and tree surgeons.

Damian Field runs Complete Tree Works in Medway. He told us: "Since Christmas we have trebled the workload and were having difficulty getting round to everyone.

"Our bookings were already up, but with the high winds and storms, we have to sort out a lot of emergencies with trees leaning up against houses.

"They do take priority, but it is only now that the calls for emergency storm damage are starting to ease up.

"We really can't believe how many trees came down, and even more left in a dangerous and precarious state. Some were threatening to fall on homes, so we did all we could to help people avoid any further damage."

Roz Broadley, at RJ Broadley Tree Surgery in Thanet, said: "Work for us has quadrupled. If there is a risk to life and limb or property, we will make those priority jobs.

"Work is still coming in as the rain is continuing and the winds are picking up from time to time. The ground is so wet now the roots are having trouble keeping hold and that is making a lot of trees in danger of coming down.

"We haven't known a time like this for years. The calls just keep coming in asking for help."

Jo Thornby runs Tree Fellas in Little Knoll, Tunbridge Wells, with tree surgeon husband Paul.

She said: "We have four large conifers in our own garden that were dragged out of the ground by the roots thanks to the high winds. It is a terrible time for people.

"We are getting lots of calls from the elderly who are scared trees in their gardens would fall on them or their homes, so we try to get to those calls quickly.

"Work has been absolutely manic with many calls coming in every day, even now with the really high winds having died down a bit."

Wettest January on record... what will elements do next?

KENT and large swathes of the south east have had their wettest January since records began - and there seems to be no let up with rain expected over the coming days.

Met Office statistics for January 2014, released on Thursday, revealed the south east and the central/southern England region have had their wettest January since records began in 1910.

Areas from Devon to Kent have already seen twice the average rainfall for the month – 175.2mm, beating the previous record of 158.2mm set in January 1988.

For the UK as a whole, 164.6mm of rain had fallen up until Wednesday – 35 per cent above the long term average,

A Met Office spokesman said: "We have seen quite a contrast from south to north across the UK, with northern Scotland having received 85 per cent of its long term average rainfall so far this month, a sharp contrast to the 200 per cent over southern England.

"Looking at the winter season so far, the whole of the UK is on target for a wetter than average winter.

"The main reason for the mild and wet weather so far is we have seen a predominance of west and south-west winds, bringing in mild air from the Atlantic – as well as unsettled and stormy conditions."

Fears grow for barn owls after severe weather

Once there were 4,000 breeding pairs in England but as **Marijke Cox** reports that number could now be below 1,000

EMBEDDED in English folklore and a firm favourite in the hearts of the nation, the barn owl remains a true wildlife icon.

But the severe wet weather continuing to hit the county is threatening this beloved species.

Numbers of the beautiful bird have plummeted significantly as a result of the appalling conditions, sparking fears among wildlife experts that the species' future is in doubt.

Barn owls were once a regular sight across Kent, particularly on the wildlife-rich North Kent Marshes and Romney Marsh.

But the cold winters of the last few years and most recently the lashing rain, which has caused severe flooding in parts of the county, has had a devastating impact on the species.

Wet weather causes huge problems for the birds because they are unable to hunt.

Explains Hannah Bosence from the Barn Owl Trust: "They are struggling massively. They are unable to hunt in the rain as they are not waterproof.

"Their feathers are designed for silent flight more than protection from the elements."

According to some worrying reports, numbers have declined by as much as 70 per cent since the 1980s.

And the recent freak storms and unrelenting wet weather seen this winter have not helped the dwindling species.

Wildlife experts say England should be home to as many as 4,000 breeding pairs, but it is now estimated there are fewer than 1,000.

> **"They are unable to hunt in the rain as they are not waterproof. Their feathers are designed for silent flight not protection from the elements"**
>
> **Hannah Bosence,** The Barn Owl Trust

Ms Bosence explained: "Their demise is not just attributed to adverse weather conditions.

"Conservationists estimate that a third of all young barn owls end up dead at the roadside or on railway lines.

"There is also real concern that the use of rodenticides [rat poison] – which control rat populations – is having a serious impact on the birds' mortality, fears founded on the basis that rat poison has been found in the bodies of 91 per cent of dead birds.

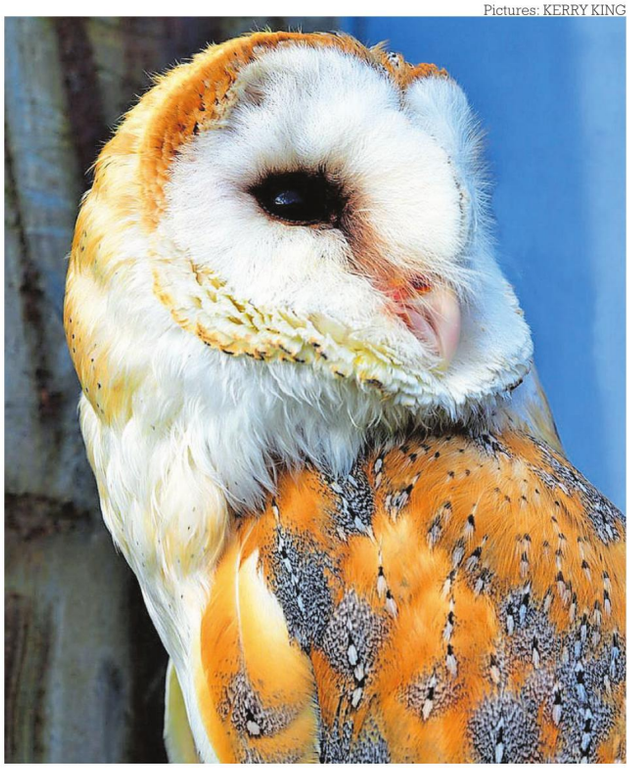
"Habitat plays a big role in barn owl survival. Having a reliable hunting ground is hugely important.

"Changing countryside management has also had a massive effect on their numbers, with intensive farming increasing ever since the 1950s."

The Barn Owl Trust said the plummet in numbers means some children know the bird only from posters and greeting cards.

In the wild, the average life span of a barn owl can be as short as two years as they fall victim to predators or accidents, while captive birds have lived as long as 20.

Pictures: KERRY KING





IN A FLAP: Wise and wonderful, the barn owl is one of the nation's favourite birds but severe weather, man and poisons have slashed numbers

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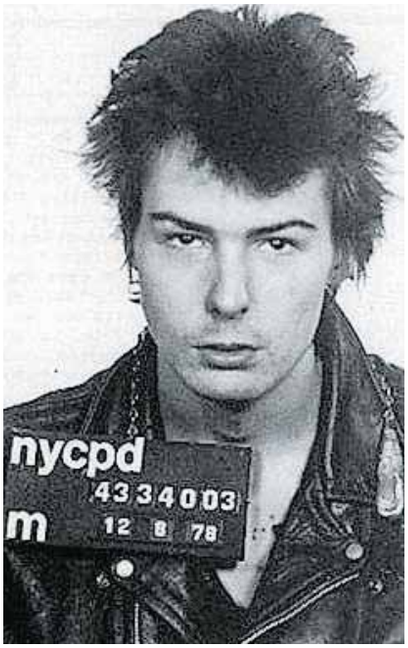
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ROCK STAR: Born Simon John Ritchie in London, the youth who would become Sid Vicious, bass player of the Sex Pistols, spent some of his early years in the leafy environs of Tunbridge Wells

Punk icon's Kent childhood before descent into tragedy

On the 35th anniversary of his death, **Chris Murphy** looks at how Sex Pistols' star Sid Vicious went from a childhood in Tunbridge Wells to a life of notoriety and an early grave...

THE face of punk was supposed to be the snarling, smirking Johnny Rotten – his bright orange hair and style a landmark in popular culture as lead singer of the Sex Pistols.

And while it remains a key image, it is perhaps Sid Vicious who encapsulates the punk movement better than anyone else.

He lived fast and died young; legend has it he could barely play the bass, but he had the looks and the swagger necessary to create an image which remains as powerful today as it did back then.

Yet many feel his death – 35 years ago this Sunday – was always only a matter of time, after he found himself caught in a self-destructive spiral of drug use and facing a murder charge.

Fewer, however, will be aware that he spent years as a boy in the leafy surroundings of Tunbridge Wells.

He spent some six years in the spa town, growing up there between 1964 and 1971. It was far from an idyllic childhood, however.

He was born Simon John Ritchie in London on May 10, 1957, to parents Anne and John who had met in the RAF.

His father left after two years and the young Sid was jetted out to Ibiza with his mother. The plan was that his father would support them, financially, but when his cheques dried up, not even selling cannabis joints to local fisherman would allow Anne to support them both.

Sid, however, was already dabbling with some of the local exotic alcoholic drinks.

Anne moved them back to London and soon became dependent on drugs.

Sid went to Soho Parish School and remains the only student in the school's history not to have three ticks next to his name on their first day for register calling – he had to make his own way there and was late.

A teacher there remembers him being almost starved.

His road to Kent began in 1964 when his mother met Chris Beverley, a middle class intellectual from Tunbridge Wells. They had a whirlwind romance and were married the following year.

Happiness would be short-lived, however, as he died of cancer just six months later.

> **"He was bright, deserving of his place in the A-stream, and quite good at football. I remember him as tall and thin...he always ponged of garlic"**
>
> **Jeremy Colbrooke,** Former classmate of Sid Vicious

By now Sid and his mother had moved to a rented flat at 43 Lime Hill Road, a terraced street close to the town centre. Sid went to the local Sandown Secondary School.

A former classmate, Jeremy Colebrooke, recalled what Sid was like as a student in an interview with Mojo magazine.

He explained: "He was bright, certainly deserving of his place in the A-stream, and quite good at football.

"I remember him as tall and thin and almost Chinese-looking. He had jet black hair, a round face and slitted eyes, which were deep brown with a darkness around them.

"His mother must have been quite arty and bohemian for the time, because Simon [Sid] always ponged of garlic, which was highly unusual back then."

The reality is that life at home was hard. His mother was taking heroin.

Sid took solace in a pet ferret he acquired. In a vague bid to win at least some favour in class, he took his pet to school where it escaped to the amusement of fellow students and anger of the teacher.

He never took friends home for fear of them seeing his mother in a drugged stupor.

Violence inevitably followed and a row over a missing football scarf saw Sid attack a fellow student.

By July 1971, Sid and his mother moved back to London.

Feeling his first name of Simon was "too Tunbridge Wells" he instead used his middle name of John.

After dropping out of school early, he went back into education, attending Hackney Technical College, where he met John Lydon, later to become known as Johnny Rotten.

By the winter of 1975/76, Sid had moved into a squat at New Court, Hampstead, with Lydon – acquiring the name Sid Vicious, courtesy of Lydon's hamster, Sid, which bit him.

They hung around the London fashion store SEX run by Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood.

Fusing the fashion with the attitude of a disaffected youth and the underground movement, McLaren sculpted the Sex Pistols with Rotten as frontman.

The band's image as bad-boys was carefully developed and when they crossed into the mainstream, they shocked a subdued nation.

Not one of the original members, Sid only joined the band in 1977 – legend has it with barely a passing ability to play the bass guitar. However, he had the looks McLaren knew would work to the band's favour.

The band's cultural high point was vying for number one at the time of the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 with their God Save The Queen single, which was hugely controversial.

But it was when he met Nancy Spungen, a head-strong drug addict and groupie, that the writing was truly on the wall for Sid.

As the band's notoriety crossed the Atlantic, they performed a string of shows in the US, but relations began to break down and the band split in San Francisco in January 1978.

After a brief effort at getting a solo career off the ground, his life took a turn for the worse in October 1978.

Spungen was found in her underwear in the bathroom of Room 100 at the Chelsea Hotel in New York. She had one stab wound to the stomach.

Her wounds matched that of a hunting knife Sid had purchased just days before. She bled to death.

Vicious was arrested and charged with her murder. Out on bail, he attempted suicide, but failed.

He underwent treatment and was, by the October, apparently clean of the heroin he had become addicted to. He held a gathering for friends at his New York apartment during which he took a fatal dose of heroin. He was only 21.

Debate over how Spungen died, and the circumstances surrounding his overdose, have continued ever since. His mother committed suicide in 1996. She always claimed her son was innocent of Spungen's death.

His life was short and traumatic. His legacy continues to fascinate young and old to this day.

Think before you plan a strategy

CPRE Protect Kent PR manager **Jamie Weir** warns councils must ensure they set themselves realistic targets to avoid the erosion of our precious countryside in order to satisfy inflated housing targets



THERE is undoubtedly a need to build more housing in Kent to accommodate an ever-growing population.

You wouldn't necessarily expect a conservation charity which has in the past been called a Nimby (Not In My Backyard) to say that.

However, what we really seek to do is stop development which will be unsustainable, inappropriate and excessive.

Instead of greenfield development nibbling away at our countryside, we want to work with both councils and developers to ensure that urban regeneration and brownfield development are priorities.

When the Government radically overhauled the planning system and introduced the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012, CPRE Protect Kent was a vocal critic.

One of the concerns we had with the new system was the requirement for each council to keep a deliverable five-year land supply.

Although the NPPF was introduced in 2012, councils are only beginning to feel the full implications of this policy now.

Our senior planner, Brian Lloyd, has been speaking at Dover District Council's Land Allocations Local Plan (LALP) examination in public this week.

The council's core strategy identified extremely high housing targets for the district when it was adopted. The NPPF's requirement that councils' should be able to demonstrate a deliverable five-year land supply has meant that due to this high target, Dover is now being forced to ensure there is a large supply of land ready to be developed.

Late last year, we witnessed what happens when a council cannot ensure there is a deliverable supply of land.

The council granted permission to develop on a greenfield site in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at Western Heights and Farthingloe.

This would not have happened without the high housing target which Dover had set itself.

This target was unrealistic at the time, and the last few years' worth of housing completions in the district show it is persistently failing to meet its annual delivery rate.

Our senior planner has been asking the inspector at the LALP examination to consider these facts and ask the council to rethink its current housing targets before any other beautiful, unspoilt countryside is developed due to a deficient five-year land supply.

If Dover retains its high housing targets, then there is a clear danger that other developments in completely the wrong location may emerge.

The requirement for a five-year land supply means that councils should not look to bring forward aspirational and unachievably high housing figures.

If they do, then they are running the very real risk that development may end up being forced upon them, in an area which is simply unsuitable to it.

However, many councils are still trying to do just that.

Canterbury City Council's recent draft Local Plan has exceedingly high housing targets.

Our concern is that a plan which has unrealistic housing targets will lead to development which is unplanned, badly located and unsustainable.

This is surely the worst possible scenario for our beautiful Kent countryside and the benefit it brings to so many people.

CPRE is currently campaigning to keep your countryside beautiful, and ensure that when housing is built, it is built in the right locations, where it is needed and where it will be sustainable.

If you would like to support us, please sign our Charter for the Countryside which you can access by visiting www.protectkent.og.uk



Exclusive: When new laws were granted to police last year to crack down on some annoying, and dangerous, driving habits, a flurry of fines was expected. But, **Chris Murphy** reveals, it's not the case

Middle-lane road hogs and tailgaters escape penalties

NOT one driver has been prosecuted under a new law introduced to eliminate motorists hogging the middle-lane on our motorways or tailgating, we can reveal.

The laws were introduced amid much fanfare on August 16 last year.

But, according to the latest figures provided to us by Kent Police, not one motorist has fallen foul of the police's new powers.

Officers told us there had been tickets issued for undertaking, not pulling over for an emergency vehicle and even accelerating through a puddle, but not for traditional bugbears tailgating or failing to budge from the middle lane.

The news was, however, welcomed by the Alliance of British Drivers which argued the ability of police to dish out on-the-spot fines was open to miscarriages of justice.

Kent co-ordinator Terry Hudson told us: "I would say we, as an organisation, are not enamoured with the way the laws are enforced in this country or the thinking that goes behind much of the legislation that is imposed upon us.

"We feel by fully endorsing new laws concerning tailgating and lane hogging on motorways, pushing into a queue of traffic, inappropriate speed plus a number of others, on the face of it might sound fine, but in real world terms, the on-the-spot fine system is not always quick justice, but can be quick injustice.

"We used to have a system of laws that said 'beyond all reasonable doubt' before being convicted, but this no longer seems to apply and all we hear about is a justice system that needs 'speeding up' and court time must not be 'wasted'.

"Wasted for who? Certainly not for the accused, who faces a fine and the knock-on effect of a driving ban.

"If we are going to have an 'open book' system where the police are the prosecution, judge and jury, then at the very least we should have back–up video evidence of the alleged offence, so both parties know there is visible evidence and not just the word of a police officer.

"It is bad enough that any court appearance for driving offences is pretty much sham justice, as the magistrates will always back the police view and have very little knowledge of some of the more technical evidence presented, especially in speeding offences. But it is at least a chance to have your say in court.

"But, did we need new laws in the first place? There is only one driving lane on a motorway the rest are overtaking lanes, so we already had laws to prevent lane hogging which in turn would have prevented most tailgating.

MOST ANNOYING MOTORING HABITS SOURCE: AA/POPULUS



"Even on the four lane parts of the M2/A2 people still drive with two empty lanes on their nearside.

"As transport ministers are so transient and come and go every couple of years and feel they must 'do something' when they come to power, we end up with many ill-conceived laws and not a planned programme to improve the general driving standard.

"We do not think that fining ever more people is the way forward, when in the first instance a more traditional talking to would achieve more respect for the law and the reason of why it is there."

> **"The new laws might sound fine, but in real world terms, the on-the-spot fine system is not always quick justice, but can be quick injustice."**
>
> **Terry Hudson,** Alliance of British Drivers

Paul Watters from the AA said it is still a little early to fully judge the success or otherwise of the legislation.

He said: "The Association of Chief Police Officers anticipated many of these being dealt under driver improvement courses, rather than prosecution which we welcome to help educate rather than fine. We know from our polling that tailgating and middle lane hogging are drivers' pet hates."

And the AA's Lorna Lee added: "When the fixed penalty notice for careless driving was introduced we did talk about how its success would be largely dependent on how effectively it was enforced, but I think, realistically, six months down the line is a bit too soon to judge them effectively."

Police now have the power to issue on-the-spot fines of £100 and put three points on driving licences.

The idea of the new legislation is to make it easier for the police to tackle problem drivers without being tied up with the bureaucracy of taking offenders to court.

But policing the new laws will require officers to make a subjective judgement on whether a particular manoeuvre is illegal or not, according to solicitor Neil Davies, who specialises in motoring offences.

He said: "One of the ways in which a court would assess that question is has the person driving departed from the Highway Code. How well is that person driving?

"Now in issuing the fixed penalty notices of course one would hope that police officers do exercise a degree of discretion, a degree of common sense and that they only issue these notices in appropriate circumstances."

Under the new legislation, fines or other offences, ranging from using hand-held mobile phones or not wearing a seatbelt, to driving without insurance, have also been increased – from £60 to £100 and from £200 to £300 respectively.

The Department of Transport said: "The changes give the police the power to issue fixed penalty notices for careless driving and allow them greater flexibility when dealing with less serious careless driving offences, such as tailgating or middle-lane hogging, as well as freeing them from resource intensive court processes.

"The police will also be able to offer educational training as an alternative to licence endorsement, and drivers will still be able to appeal any decision in court."

A Kent Police spokesman said: "Where an incident of bad driving is reported to Kent Police's control room, any available details are logged of the vehicle and driver and, if timely, details of the vehicle will also be instantly passed to patrols.

"Officers will then consider whether a prosecution is appropriate based on the evidence available and any witnesses statements."

■ **What do you think? Share your views. Write to: The Editor, KoS, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford TN25 6SS or email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.**

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Note: Attendance by the Queen and Prince Charles not guaranteed

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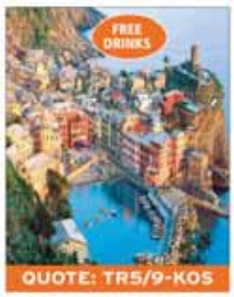
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*6 April departure also by air from Gatwick to Nice - 1 night in Nice then 6 nights in Diano Marina

TUSCANY COAST & COUNTRY EXPLORER BY RAIL



Escorted Holiday by rail
8 days, semi-all-inclusive, £899pp
Departs 23 May & 20 September, 2014

QUOTE: TR5/9-KOS

Come with us to incomparable Tuscany. The Tuscan seaside town of Forte dei Marmi has been described as the region's Beverly Hills and here we enjoy free drinks every night at our hotel. We will visit Lucca, Pisa, Florence and Porto Venere - with access to stunning Cinque Terra. There is also the opportunity to visit Portofino.

INCLUDED:
- Escorted throughout
- Return Eurostar & TGV rail travel London St Pancras to Nice (from Ebbsfleet on request)
- 1 night hotel B&B in or near Nice & 6 nights in Italy with 6 buffet breakfasts, 6 dinners & Free Drinks from 6pm to 10pm every night
- Excursions & transfers

BRUSSELS' CARPET OF FLOWERS & BRUGES



Escorted Holiday by rail
4 days, £359pp
Departs 15 August, 2014

CHAMPAGNE CHECK-IN

QUOTE: BC8-KOS

Come with us to see Belgium's Carpet of Flowers - set in the unique, ancient surroundings of the Grand-Place in Brussels. The beauty and diversity of the displays is truly magical. Our holiday starts with a glass of Bubbly at St Pancras famous Champagne bar before taking an early afternoon Eurostar direct to Brussels. We stay for 3 nights in a 4-star city-centre hotel and also visit the delightful city of Bruges.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout • Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras • Return Eurostar & TGV rail travel London St Pancras to Brussels (from Ebbsfleet on request) • 3 nights B&B stay at a 4-star hotel in Brussels • Excursion to Bruges by train • Transfers from station to hotel on arrival and departure

ZUNDERT FLOWER PARADE & ANTWERP



Escorted Holiday by rail
4 days, £369pp
Departs 5 September, 2014

QUOTE: AZ9-KOS

Come with us on a charming break taking in the spectacular Zundert Flower Parade and Antwerp. The parade is made up of breathtaking displays entirely created by volunteers using dahlias - the largest of its kind in the world. Many of them are animated, giving a truly realistic appearance. The town is also renowned as the birth place of Vincent Van Gogh. Antwerp, Belgium's second biggest city, is our base for this break and is a true architectural wonder.

INCLUDED:
- Escorted throughout
- Return rail Eurostar travel from London St Pancras to Antwerp (from Ebbsfleet on request)
- 3 nights B&B stay at a 3-star hotel in Antwerp
- Excursion to Zundert Flower Parade including reserved seating
- Transfers from station to hotel on arrival and departure

RIVIERA OF FLOWERS & GARDENS



Escorted Holiday by rail
8 days, semi-all-inclusive £869pp
Departs 16 May, 2014

CHAMPAGNE CHECK-IN

QUOTE: FF5-KOS

This super floral sojourn starts with a glass of Bubbly at St Pancras (Ebbsfleet departures on request) before travelling by Eurostar to Lille or Paris for an overnight stay. We continue by TGV train to Nice and Diano Marina. On the Riviera we visit Monaco and its Jardin Exotique, the Villa & Jardins Ephrussi de Rothschild, Hanbury Gardens, Serre de la Madone garden, and Portofino. We also enjoy Free Drinks every night at our hotel.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout • Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras • Return Eurostar & TGV rail travel London St Pancras to Nice (from Ebbsfleet on request) • 1 night hotel B&B in Paris or Lille outbound • 6 nights in Diano Marina with 6 buffet breakfasts, 6 dinners and free drinks 6pm to 11pm every night - local brands of beer, wine & spirits • All Excursions • Transfers abroad

BATTLEFIELDS OF FLANDERS & THE LAST POST



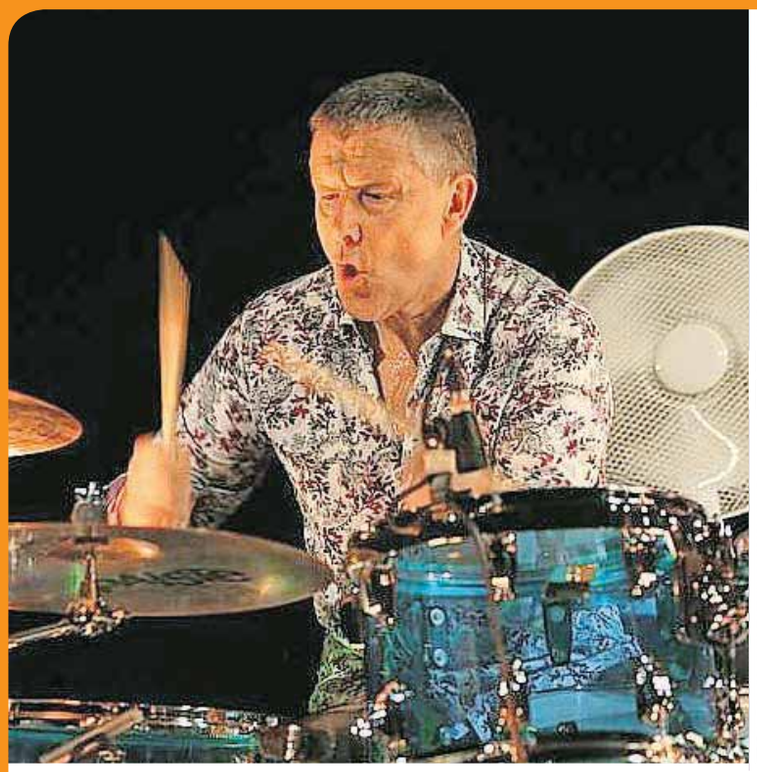
Escorted Holiday by rail
4 days, £369pp
Departs 11 July, 2014

QUOTE: BF7-KOS

2014 will mark the 100th Anniversary of the start of the First World War. By the end of 1914 the battlelines of the Allied and German forces were deadlocked and so began the onset of Trench Warfare which claimed so many Allied and German lives. We will visit historic Flanders, accompanied by a guide, we will also learn some fascinating military history at the interactive In Flanders Fields museum and also visit key sites of the Ypres battlefields as well as the Menin Gate where the last post is re-enacted every day at dusk.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout • Return Eurostar from London St Pancras to Lille (from Ebbsfleet on request) • 3 nights stay at a 3/4-star hotel in Lille • 3 buffet breakfasts • Excursions to Ypres and Flanders Fields and museum entries

Note: Price of Holidays by Air subject to flight availability at time of booking - supplement may apply







Still progressing after all these years... King Carl

Set to play Chatham's Central Theatre, rock legend Carl Palmer talks to **Dave Mairs** about keeping fit, improving his technique and the joy of performing

THEY can be a crazy bunch, rock drummers, but Carl Palmer, one of the world's finest, today talks a very different way of life.

"I run, I'm vegetarian-cum-vegan and I don't eat dairy products," said the man who has plied his trade with The Crazy World of Arthur Brown, Atomic Rooster, Asia and, of course, Emerson, Lake and Palmer.

"There's no cheese, milk or butter – they might be some in some products, but where I can I avoid them. You need to be strict to maintain standards – you need to look after yourself."

Palmer is one of the giants of prog rock, has played some of the largest stadia in the world and is now establishing himself as a successful artist while still following a frenetic gigging schedule... and more than 50 years after getting behind a drum kit he can reflect on a rock'n'roll career that has left him remarkably intact.

Any lifestyle excesses aside, it's perhaps not widely appreciated that clattering the living daylights out of a drum kit gig after gig, together with the hours spent in practice, takes its toll on a body, but at the ripe old age of 63 Palmer is happy to talk down the stresses and strains of something he started when he was 11.

"I had carpal tunnel syndrome in both hands back in 1997, but it's been operated on, so I'm not worried about that. It's a 45-minute operation, with six to seven weeks' recovery, so there's nothing to worry about."

> **"It's an instrumental band with the top end of British players. Prog rock has turned into something with a more metal edge."**

And that, apparently, was that in the medical department – testament, perhaps, to good living.

His time with Emerson, Lake and Palmer (ELP) still defines him most strongly and this month he brings Carl Palmer's ELP Legacy to Chatham's Central Theatre.

"I've just been keeping it going for the last 12 years," he said. "It's an instrumental band with the top end of British players. Prog rock has turned into something with a more metal edge. It's more delicatessen than supermarket today – there's a smaller number of people involved."

At which point it would be useful to share a (brief) word on both prog rock and ELP themselves.

'Prog' is an abbreviated term for progressive rock, marked by greater musical sophistication than surrounding genres; a wider array of instruments, most markedly keyboards; long tracks (a single composition might take a whole side of an album, or even both); elaborate stage sets; and concepts. Yes, the concept album... arguably the most diagnostic feature of a prog-rock band. And of those bands, which number such monsters as King Crimson, Yes, Genesis, Pink Floyd and Jethro Tull in any notional hall of fame, ELP were just possibly the greatest.

Palmer cites the band playing casinos with crowds of "anywhere from 1,800 to 2,000 people" through larger venues holding 10,000-15,000 to the extraordinary experience of performing in front of 78,000 at the Montreal Olympic Stadium in 1977 and, topping the lot, 120,000 at Ontario Motor Speedway, near Los Angeles, in 1972.

Palmer is probably under-selling the last event, the California Jam Festival, or Cal Jam, which hosted anything from 200,000 to 350,000 fans, depending on which article you read. It was also in 1974, not 1972, but with figures like these any kind of precision seems almost immaterial.

The band's Greg Lake said of Cal Jam: "The entire festival, including the ELP performance, was seen by over a million viewers, who watched it in subsequent weeks on ABC TV's In Concert.

"In particular, I remember the thrill of Carl's revolving drum kit and the amazing aerobatics of Keith's piano solo done on a spinning grand piano as it turned end over end 30 feet above the stage. In a lot of ways, it was the show that gave birth to the idea of stadium rock."

ELP were big... big to the extent

Continued on page 43 »

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« Continued from page 41

that they have reportedly sold more than 40 million albums and in the mid-1970s vied with Led Zeppelin as the world's highest-grossing live band.

So there are few better qualified than Palmer to comment on changing trends in rock music.

"There were more great keyboard-players in the 70s – there are not so many now. Now there are more great rock guitarists turning their hand to keyboards. Guitarists are miles in front of keyboard-players – you lose the harmonies but get a more exciting element. I think it's to do with the advent of academies teaching guitar and drums."

As for his own technique, the desire to advance is as keen as ever.

"I want to keep improving and I still practise," he said.

"My feet are getting better – there's more dexterity. Bass drums is where I notice the most improvement."

Which can only be good news for those fans who follow this prolific musician. He still plays with supergroup Asia, who have an album out in April, while he performs "roughly 97 concerts a year".

That actually seems a very precise figure, and indeed Palmer can get even more specific: "It's normally 94 and the extra three are a lecture about starting a career in the music business and two for deaf and dumb children or children with special needs."

And what can the Central Theatre crowd expect?

Palmer promises "classical ELP compositions" and "classical adaptions", reeling off Pictures at an Exhibition, Trilogy, Knife Edge, Tarkus, Bach's Fugue in D Minor, America by Leonard Bernstein, "21st Century Schizoid Man some nights"... this is clearly a night for ELP lovers.





Pictures copyright: CARL KENDALL-PALMER LTD

TALENTS: One of the best, Carl Palmer the drummer is also an artist, using cameras to catch his whirling LED sticks

> **"It's an art form. I'd appreciate it if I was playing to four people. It's the music that drives me – I love playing."**

"We're just keeping prog going," he said.

And indeed among many of a certain vintage – most of whom have either hit or are about to hit their half-century, to be painfully precise – prog never went way, even if the music was simply referred to as rock when they were perhaps of a more appropriate age.

It's only when that old question of defining prog is raised that Palmer's voice assumes a tone approaching anything like mirth.

"Long intros defined the nature of prog rock," he said wryly. "A minute-and-a-half intro meant you were prog rock. The Minimoog and electric drums helped, as well."

Its survival, indeed its continued capacity to flourish, is all the more heartening given the scorn that was poured upon it by many in the music industry, who slated the often-huge sets and overblown stage antics while at the same time dismissing the work itself as pretentious.

The 'pretentious' charge is swiftly if predictably brushed away by Palmer: "It was a silly tag that a journalist applied to it. It was sabre-rattling because of the expense of the show, but if you look at shows today we were just laying down the blueprint for the way music was going."

Maybe, maybe not, and, with the possible exception of Muse, it is hard to think of any bands today that come close to matching the excesses of prog in all its 1970s stadium pomp.

Either way, Palmer's love for his music is obvious and he has broadened the artistic form in which it can be presented, creating collections of images through his drum work.

"I've been doing the art since about 1973," he said. "There are drumsticks you can buy that have LED tips – they're indestructible.

"I pick the two colours I want from red, green, blue and yellow and play the drums in a dark room – something from Tarkus or Tank – and there are 10 cameras on very slow shutter speeds that capture the movement of the sticks.

"It's hidden art that you would never have without technology."

And it's art that is doing well, all 210 pieces from the latest exhibition, Twist of the Wrist (which is also the name of the tour), having been sold.

Nevertheless, you suspect that music is still the first love for Palmer, who for the past 12 or 13 years has lived "between London and Cyprus" and after the tour will be playing on The Monsters of Rock Cruise and then The Moody Blues Cruise in what seems a non-stop schedule of prog.

"It's an art form," he said. "I'd appreciate it if I was playing to four people. It's the music that drives me – I love playing. Tomorrow I'm flying to Brazil and playing one gig to 900 people. I'm being paid well for it, but I'm really doing it because I want to do it."

Back in Chatham, the Central Theatre gig promises to be a special night for the county's proggy fraternity, but will they be treated to one of Palmer's more striking signature moves, the removal of his shirt during a drum solo?

"The last time I did it was in 2010 at an ELP reunion... no, I won't be doing it."

Even Carl Palmer, it seems, has to make some concession to the passage of time.

■ **Carl Palmer's ELP Legacy play The Central Theatre, Chatham, on Saturday, February 15, from 7.30pm. Phone 01634 338338, email boxoffice@medway.gov.uk or visit http://tickets.medway.gov.uk/.**

For more on Carl Palmer's work, visit carlpalmer.com/palmer.php and carlpalmerart.com.

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Town's pride in parade

Tunbridge Wells is set for its annual Winter Lantern Parade. **Greg Miles** discovers why it began and what it all means.

IT started out as a protest against the lack of Christmas lights, but now it has become a true fixture of the Tunbridge Wells calendar.

The annual Winter Lantern Parade is set for its second year under the full control of the Camden Road Education, Arts and Theatre Enterprise (CREATE).

Originally it took place before Christmas as residents and groups took a dim view of their dimly-lit street ahead of the festive period.

It then incorporated Chinese New Year but is now alive and kicking under its own steam to stave off the February blues.

This year it takes on the theme of myths and legends, with hundreds of families and groups creating their own lanterns to carry along in the parade on Saturday, February 8.

It is estimated that more than 2,000 people took part last year, which was the first that the chairman of CREATE, Dave Prodrick, looked after it. This year he is helping out organiser Liz Carter with the event.

"I remember the first year we did it – you could see how emotional it was for the people to have something so positive happening," he said. "There wasn't a profit motive in it or anything like that.



LIT UP: Many groups make their own lanterns for the parade through town

"It's just something that the community come together and do. If you look at the history of it, the first one we did before Christmas was a political statement because they decided against putting any lights up down Camden Road.

"For the first two or three years it continued to be linked with Chinese New Year, but there's not really a Chinese community here to link with it.

"When we took it on we turned it into the Winter Lantern Festival, which I think is more inclusive. It's not discriminating against any community.

"It's lighting up the dark period after Christmas – it's something to look forward to."

The parade starts outside the library in Mount Pleasant Road at 5pm before heading along Monsoon Road and Camden Road to finish at St Barnabas School for food and entertainment from 7.30pm.

Time Out Top Ten

1 The Birchington Centre, Birchington
Friday to Sunday, February 7-9
Phone: 01843 841522
Snow White: Birchington Guild of Players present annual panto by James Coare and Nikki Groom.

2 Memorial Theatre, Broadstairs
Saturday, February 8
Phone: 0845 2626263
The Ghost Hunter: One-man show that will have you on the edge of your seat. Tickets £8.

3 Quarterhouse, Folkestone
Saturday, February 8
Phone: 01303 858500
Nine Below Zero: R&B group now in their 36th year, with support from Ben Waters. Tickets £15.

4 Theatre Royal Margate
Wednesday, February 12
Phone: 01843 292795
Mark Thomas: New show 100 Acts of Minor Dissent from controversial comic. Tickets £15.

5 The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury
Wed and Thu, February 5-6
Phone: 01227 787787
Anton du Beke. From Ballroom to Broadway: Strictly dancer in new show. Tickets from £29.50.

6 Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells
Thursday, February 6
Phone: 01892 530613
Carmen: Timeless story of love and jealousy by Russian State Ballet. Tickets £31.

7 The Orchard Theatre, Dartford
Tuesday, February 4
Phone: 01322 220000
Punt and Dennis: Comedy duo Steve Punt and Hugh Dennis team up. Tickets £22.50.

8 Hazlitt Arts Centre, Maidstone
Thursday, February 6
Phone: 01622 758611
Sing-A-Long Songs of War Time: Enjoy all the classics from Glenn Miller to Vera Lynn. Tickets £13.

9 The Central Theatre, Chatham
Friday, February 7
Phone: 01643 338338
Chris Packham: Wild Nights Out: Learn about nature with wildlife expert. Tickets from £15.

10 Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells
Friday, February 7
Phone: 01892 678678
Leave Hitler To Me, Lad: Family musical set in Britain, post Second World War. Tickets £14.

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Community links help to keep tradition going

Medway is gearing up for its Chinese New Year celebrations next weekend. **Greg Miles** finds out about its historical ties.

Pictures: MEDWAY COUNCIL



THE colourful sights and sounds of Chinese New Year will be on show in Medway next weekend.

Although Chinese New Year was on Friday, January 31, the celebrations will continue in Chatham on Sunday, February 9.

Complete with dragon dances and a parade, it will be a spectacle to behold as the large numbers of Chinese residents in the town celebrate the year of the horse.

The event is organised by the Kut O Chinese Association with support from Medway Council and it takes on a special meaning for the man at the helm of the operation, Ashley Davis.

He is well integrated into the Chinese community as chairman of the Medway Dragon Lion Dance Sports Association and over the years has spent time in Medway's twinned Chinese town of Foshan just north-west of Hong Kong, teaching English.

"I used to work for Medway Council for 14 years in the tourism department and was involved in things like the Dickens Festival," said the 65-year-old. "My Chinese friend asked if I could help with their New Year celebrations and that was 12 years ago now. The first one we did was the year of the horse, which has come around again this year.

"For the first one I contacted a friend of mine who had a riding stable and she rode her horse at the front of the parade.



SPECTACLE: Chinese New Year is celebrated in Chatham next weekend

"We believe our Chinese New Year is the fifth biggest in the country now. London is the biggest and they have asked me to help out with their event in Trafalgar Square this year, which is an honour."

It has all moved on quite a bit since it started, with specialist dancers now flying over for the occasion from China and a well-known Chinese mystery guest set to appear.

"The people of Foshan send over a lion dance team every year and appear in our China show at The Central Theatre," said Davis.

"They have been training in someone's back garden in Rainham this week in the pouring rain.

"Most of the Chinese residents in Medway came from Hong Kong and the New Territories. Kut O is actually a small island off the coast of Hong Kong. It used to be a fishing area, but when the trawlers came along a lot of people left. Some came to Medway, others went to Glasgow, Amsterdam or Australia."

The Kut O Association was born out of a desire for Chinese cultures and language to be instilled in their children growing up in Kent rather than their homeland.

"Every Sunday they run a school for anyone that wants to learn Mandarin or Cantonese," said Davis. "Originally it was founded because a lot of young Chinese people living here have children and they have to be able to speak English to go to school.

"The Chinese Association wanted to give them the chance to learn their mother tongue so if they wanted to go back they could."

■**The parade takes place in Chatham at midday on Sunday, February 9.**

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Folkestone studio bares it all to win Tunick visit

George's House Gallery will host the next project by famed photographer Spencer Tunick. **Greg Miles** finds out more.



NAKED AMBITION: Spencer Tunick, left, and one of his previous works, this picture

FOLKESTONE has been chosen as the destination for famed American photographer Spencer Tunick's next project.

Tunick will be heading to the town in May for a new take on his well-known mass nude photos.

It follows a public vote that the George's House Gallery, run by Strange Cargo, won thanks to a social-media campaign.

The project will see up to 250 volunteers briefly strip naked at a location in the town.

Each individual shot will then be turned into a one-shot slideshow by insertion into a key-chain viewfinder. That will then be presented at an evening event.

A booth will be constructed in the gallery to present a fast-moving, projected slide show of the naked photographs viewed as reflected images on a mirrored mosaic wall.

It is all part of the Museums At Night event run by Connect10.

Tunick first began photographing nudes in his native New York during the early 1990s and has since



devoted himself to performance photography.

His most notable installations have been commissioned by Art Basel, Switzerland (1999), Institut Cultura, Barcelona (2003), XXV Biennial de Sao Paulo, Brazil (2002) and The Saatchi Gallery in London (2003).

The artistic director at the gallery, Brigitte Orasinski, is naturally excited about the news.

"We thought it would be a really good exciting opportunity – we didn't even expect to make the short-list," she said.

Folkestone was up against stiff opposition in the vote as Tunick looked for a seaside venue for the project. George's House Gallery took 3,736 votes, which equated to 38.2 per cent.

It beat the Royal Pavilion and Museums in Brighton by 549 votes in second, while the Jerwood Gallery in Hastings came third.

"We were contacted by Connect10, who are managing the vote, a few months ago to ask us whether we would be interested in submitting a proposal for it," said Orasinski.

"Tunick had apparently asked Connect10 if he could work with a gallery on the coast, so we said yes we were interested.

"About a week before the vote went live, we thought we would ask everybody for their support. Lots of people contacted their social groups and we've had votes from all over the world... Norway, China and America. It's been absolutely incredible.

"Everybody probably recognises it. It's quite high profile and so extraordinary."

Although the gallery knows the brief, there is still an element of mystery about Tunick's visit and what it entails.

"Most of his nude photography is outside, but not exclusively," said Orasinski. "There are several seaside locations we have suggested to use, but it is up to him at the end of the day. He wants between 100 and 250 people, but maybe that will change. It depends on how it will evolve as the ball gets rolling.

"At the moment we are just telling people to keep an eye on our website to find out what happens."

■ **For more information, visit www.strangecargo.org.uk.**

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TREAT someone special and join us for St Valentine's Night on Friday, February 14, at The Shurland Hotel.

There is a three-course romantically-inspired menu with a Kir Royale cocktail on arrival and live entertainment for £25 per person.

Or why not make a night of it? You can have dinner and bed and breakfast for just £100 per couple.

Your meal could start with a loving cup of velvety chicken and leek soup; smooth salmon mousseline served with heart-shaped croutons; or assiette of assorted melon coated in parfait d'amour liqueur.

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To finish, you could have ruby soufflé made with blueberries and crème fraîche; a marriage of vacherin, chocolate, whipped cream and fresh strawberries; or a cheeseboard with onion chutney and dried apricots.

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Dickens World has all you could desire with variety of fun and entertainment

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Where do we start?!

Well, there is the Valentine's Ball on Valentine's Night, Gangsters & Molls fancy-dress, buffet and disco, Michael Buble tribute... all for just £15 per person!

Comedy nights and live-band nights are ongoing every Friday; there are Soulful Saturdays with resident DJ Adil and an over-30s night every last Saturday of the month.

On Saturday, February 22, disco legend Gonzalez will be the special guest and on Saturday, March 29, Nineties hit-makers Living Joy will be with us.

Valentine's is of course very special, but Porters provides the perfect location for informal lunches and relaxed dining at any time.

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Friday, February 14, served from 6pm: Live swing music... Santra, Buble, Rat Pack and more.

Magnificent five-course dinner including a rose for the lady. Vegetarian menu also available. Cost is £39 per person (£5 pp deposit required).

Saturday, February 15, served from 6pm:

Live swing music... Santra, Buble, Rat Pack and more.

À la carte menu or magnificent five-course dinner including a rose for the lady. Vegetarian menu also available. Only available on Saturday if pre-ordered in advance when booking.

Cost is £39 per person (£5 pp deposit).

Sunday lunch, February 16, served from midday:

Valentine's two-course lunch menu. Live jazz music and a rose for the lady. Cost is £20 per person (£5 pp deposit required).



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Valentine's at The Red LIon

Starters

Cream of asparagus soup with heart-shaped croutons.

Sweet potato and Camembert fritters with a tomato salsa.

Smoked chicken and advocado with a herb salad.

Melon with a quenelle of sorbet and fruit coulis.

Tempura battered tiger prawns with sweet chilli sauce.

Mains

Char-grilled chicken breast with roasted vegetables and pesto linguine.

Smoked haddock and mature Cheddar fishcakes with a tomato sauce and peppery rocket salad.

Classic beef bourguignon served with creamy mashed potatoes and buttered broccoli.

Roasted peppers stuffed with spinach, goat's cheese and sun-blushed tomatoes with buttered new potatoes.

Desserts

Chocolate torte with honeycomb pieces and vanilla ice-cream.

Mango and passion fruit cheesecake, raspberry coulis and whipping cream.

Sticky toffee pudding with hot caramel sauce and vanilla ice-cream.

Glazed apple tart with crème anglaise.

Kentish cheese and biscuits (£1.50 supplement). **Total cost: £24.95**

Karen delivering new way to eat your cake



CAKE IN THE POST? Karen Murdoch founded Yummycards, which sends cake through the post for all occasions… perfect for Valentine's Day

Karen Murdoch left behind the world of interior design, including working at Claridge's hotel, to set up her take on birthday cards. **Greg Miles** discovers that what might have seemed a potentially disastrous idea is proving popular.

GETTING post for your birthday, Valentine's Day, Christmas, Mother's Day, Father's Day and the rest is always great – but imagine if you could eat what dropped through your letter-box.

It is an idea that has taken off for a mum of two in Tunbridge Wells whose edible-cake-card company Yummycard is sending orders out across the British Isles on a daily basis.

Karen Murdoch hit on the idea thanks to Facebook and spends day upon day in her kitchen crafting cakes thin enough to fit through your letterbox for every occasion.

You might think that there are households up and down the country with crumbly messes falling on to their doormats after going through the rigours of the British postal system. However, Karen's creations are made of sterner stuff than that, with the only problem her cakes are likely to encounter being a dog waiting for the morning delivery!



The former interior designer, who worked at such prestigious venues as Claridge's in London during a previous job, had the Eureka! moment when her daughter Polly mentioned that her friends were sending virtual birthday cards on social-networking site Facebook.

"My daughter said you could send a virtual cake on Facebook," said the 47-year-old. "I thought that was silly and thought it would be nice to receive an actual cake through the post.

"It was then a case of designing it so it could fit through a letter-box and cope with the rigours of the post. I also had to get the packaging right."

Sending food through the post is not a new idea as ice biscuits have caught on in recent years. But cakes are Karen's speciality, having baked many of them when looking after her two children in their younger days.

And so in 2009 Yummycards was born.

"There are a lot of people doing it with biscuits, but as far as I'm aware I'm the first to do it with cakes," she said. "Biscuits are more brittle and can break in the post, so I will leave that to others.

"It took about six months to do the website and get the products right. When I launched it, I had orders straight away. I've got a few supportive friends who spread the word and I was baking quite a few every week.

"They have changed quite a bit and have evolved.

"At first they were in a little case, but I do it differently now with different shapes and numbers. I guess there's just more variety for people. My biggest seller is the number ones. The shape of the box means that I can only do cakes started with a number 1 and I can't do a nought because it won't fit."

The cakes are sent by first-class post, meaning they arrive the next day. But how do they survive the journey exactly?

"The icing is quite resilient – they just last," she said. "If it was a bigger cake, there would be more logistical problems. The cake is stuck on a board with icing and the board is the same size as the box, so it doesn't move.

"It is quite a snug fit in the box, so it doesn't rattle around. It was a lot of trial and error."

Continued on page 49 »

» For more food and drink articles pick up a copy of this month's KENT LIFE

« Continued from page 48

The measurements of the cake and box are the most important ingredient in Karen's recipe for success.

"The boxes are 25mm thick – if they went above 30mm the cost of the post would be tripled. It would go up by £3 to post it and it would be too expensive then," she said.

"There are a few letter-boxes that are upright and they tend to get delivered to a neighbour's house. The only problem is if there's a dog.

"They don't take that long to cook because they're small, but they are time-consuming to decorate. They are really fiddly. I'm thinking about simplifying them a bit."

The uniqueness of her business is what makes it work as far as Karen is concerned.

"It's like a card, but it's all 3D," she said. "It's an edible work of art. I think people like it because it has the personal touch. It brightens someone's day if it's got their name on it. It's a bit more exciting than a birthday card.

"It's a bit different – that's what people want. It's convenient that people can order it over the internet rather than trudge into the high street.

"Sometimes people order it to their own address so they can give it to the person themselves."

Having started with the help of friends spreading the word, she is now sending cakes far and wide.

"I get orders from all over the place – people in Abu Dhabi, Australia, America and France want to send cards to people they know in England," said Karen. "I seem to have a lot that get sent to Scotland – I don't know why."





BRIGHT SPARK: The edible-cake-card idea came about when Karen Murdoch's daughter told her about virtual cakes being sent to friends via Facebook

Her background in design has certainly helped her with the creative side of things.

"I have got a degree in design and I have always flicked between interior design and cakes," she said. "I ended up doing interior design at hotels, but cakes I have always come back to.

"I was also doing kitchen design for a company in Cranbrook, but that was falling on hard times and about five years ago I just came into this.

"My degree was in interior design. I went straight into working in London with a company that did hotels. We did a suite in Claridge's and it was all five-star venues, all nice hotels. That was great because I was straight out of university then.

"I got pregnant with my son and it wasn't the type of job I could do because it was commuting and it was long hours. My son is 20 now and I've had my daughter, too. I was a stay-at-home mum for a while. I did a few wedding cakes while they were younger.

"I had just designed my own kitchen and went into a lot of detail with it. I had never done it before. But having had a design background I learnt a lot doing that. It helped me get the job in Cranbrook afterwards."

While Karen does not envisage moving away from cakes to send other foods in the post, she does hope to develop the business.

"I want to grow the business, but I'm slightly redeveloping it to make it simpler," she said. "I would quite like to move out of the kitchen and have a separate unit. As it grows, it's hard to have it in the home."

■ **For more information, visit www.yummycard.co.uk.**



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Inequity in what faith schools offer

YOUR report on the Kent Freedom Pass (KoS, last week) highlights the inequity which state-funded faith schools offer to parents and their children.

You state, the loss of funds for these bus journeys "...could hit some schools, particularly faith schools, hard. Faith schools traditionally attract many out-of-town pupils who want to go to a denominational facility".

A recent report from the Fair Admissions Campaign has shown how faith-based admissions to schools cause socio-economic and ethnic segregation.

Parents seek out faith schools because they think their children should be separated from 'nasty' influences of a more local 'secular' school.

Despite declining church attendance, parents often go to church, just for a few visits, in order to get their children into faith schools.

These schools are funded through taxes paid by everyone – yet entry is often restricted.

The National Secular Society opposes religious privilege in the public sphere; if people wish to follow a faith, they are at liberty to do this voluntarily in their own time. In most 'advanced' countries education is not biased towards a specific faith.

Denis Cobell, former president, National Secular Society, London

How can silly boy secret clubs exist?

WITH reference to your recent article about Freemasonary (KoS 19.01), it is alarming to think that these silly boy secret clubs still exist in an open, honest and transparent 21st century society.

Scarier still to think they may also have an influence on things that affect people.

Still, I suppose it gives a sense of over importance to a select minority of pensioners.

Name & address supplied

Lower speeds will save people's lives

TERRY Hudson is opposed to the lower motorway speed limits, which are planned for stretches of road that are causing illegally high levels of air pollution, and to the introduction of 20mph speed limits, which would apply to minor residential roads (Letters, last week).

However, both these measures will save lives.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents states that the risk of death for a pedestrian rises sharply when a car is driven at 30 mph compared to 20 mph. One pedestrian is killed almost every day by a car in a residential area in the UK, and more than 60 are injured each day.

Research by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that particulates from car exhausts and power stations caused around 80 premature deaths each day in the UK and more than 2,000 each day worldwide.

Clearly, lower speed limits, or just the proper enforcement of existing ones, will benefit us all. They will save lives, prevent many injuries and reduce air pollution, noise pollution and global warming.

Richard Mountford, Hildenborough

LETTER OF THE WEEK



'Money' is at root of ills of English cricket

LORD MacLaurin may have had a successful career at Tesco, but after five years as chairman of the England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB), his knowledge of cricket is sadly lacking.

He suggests drastically altering our County Championship structure and merging Kent and Sussex, because he claims everybody now watches Twenty20, IPL and the international variety.

I have watched Kent playing since 1946 and I know that I am not alone in never having watched the other form of 'cricket'.

Like many things today, money has ruined our great national game and it is sad that we do not often see batting today such as that provided by Arthur Phebey, a most correct stroke player, of the majesty or a Colin Cowdrey cover drive, the power of Arthur Fagg and the dearth of spin bowlers like Ray Dovey or Doug Wright, or the accuracy of a Derek Underwood.

Ian Bell was recently quoted as saying the gap between Test and Twenty20 cricket was producing two different sports.

He said: "The switch hit is a T20 invention imported from baseball and youngsters now grow up flicking the ball over their heads and batting in a manner that any coach would regard as the enemy of textbook cricket.

"In time, young players will choose one path or the other and, as T20 is where the money is, only then will the crisis facing the Test game be fully realised."

Hopefully Kent's chief executive Jamie Clifford is right when he says the Ashes whitewash is just a blip and England will get back on top.

However, we must find the right people who understand what is wrong and what needs to be done to rectify this situation, like dedicated coaches and knowledgeable administrators.. especially future chairmen of the ECB.

Derek Thompson, Herne Bay

'Hospital closure clause' needs MPs

OPEN letter to Laura Sandys and Sir Roger Gale:

As the MPs for Thanet I am asking you to press to get the Care Bill amended regarding the Clause 118, dubbed the 'hospital closure clause'.

If Clause 118 becomes law in February the fate of hospitals across the country could be taken out of our hands.

We already know that the Government is quietly reviewing the future of half the hospitals in the country, not least the QEQM in Thanet.

Clause 118 will remove the law that protected the Lewisham Hospital. It may be remembered it took health secretary Jeremy Hunt to court stopping him from closing accident and emergency and maternity services at Lewisham.

They won their case – even also winning the appeal that he lodged.

If Clause 118 is adopted this protection by law will be lost.

Writing in the British Medical Journal, Professor Allyson Pollock says that the clause will "undermine equal access to care in England" and removes "checks and balances designed to ensure that changes are in the interest of the communities affected".

Please don't let this happen. Please act to support your constituents by getting the 'hospital closure clause' dropped.

Betty Renz, via email

What's going on at BBC Radio Kent?

AS a regular listener of BBC Radio Kent for many years, I've been surprised - and more than a little disappointed - at the breakfast show in recent weeks which appears to have switched from an informative news service to a 'soft' feature-led programme featuring reports on obscure things such as man-bags and cooking breakfast.

Are bosses at the BBC trying to give the show more 'personality' to appeal to a different audience?

If so, it's not working and is unlikely to do so. Radio Kent was a good, informative news service and going down this route will undoubtedly lose it loyal listeners.

Ruth Dobson, via email

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles which tie in with our parent company Archant's overall mission statement.

Archant's mission statement is: ''We bring together motivated buyers and sellers through the creation of unique and compelling content and community expertise.'' This is summed up in the strapline 'Inspiring Communities'.

The way KoS will create our unique and compelling content is to follow these 10 principles:

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

images of kent



Cabbage fields at Birchington

by **Molly Hollman** from Canterbury

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READY FOR TAKE OFF: The Rochester Airport masterplan will secure not only its future but also bring up to 1,000 jobs to the area as a whole

Airport's future secure as jobs plan takes off

The masterplan is not all about the airport, a new hub for science and technology businesses will also be built, as **Joe Bill** finds out

AN ambitious scheme to secure the future of Rochester Airport as well as create 1,000 jobs in the area has finally been approved by Medway Council.

The Rochester Airport masterplan includes the creation of a new hub for science and technology firms and an upgrade of its buildings and facilities.

Medway Council has owned the land used by the airport since 1933. It is now leased to its current operator Rochester Airport Limited.

The approval of the masterplan comes after a comprehensive public consultation, during which there was opposition from local residents who complained about the possible repercussions of the airport's transformation.

Some 800 wrote to the council to raise worries about noise, pollution and the potential negative impact on house prices.

> **"The airport is an important asset and securing its future will help the regeneration of Medway"**

Proposals involve replacing many of the existing buildings and facilities of the airport that are now reaching the end of their useful life and a reconfiguration of the existing runways.

One of the grass runways on site will be closed and replaced with a new paved runway allowing aircraft to take off and climb to a higher altitude quicker, reducing the impact of noise on surrounding homes.

A second grass runway will stay allowing the Medway Aircraft Preservation Society (MAPS) to continue to use the site for heritage aircraft and open days.

The new runway layout will allow 29 acres near to Rochester Airport Industrial Estate to be developed as a new hub for science or technology-related firms – with the

Continued on page 55 »

If you have a business story, we would like to hear from you. Telephone on **01303 817100** or email **editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.**

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Training, courses & careers

Film is latest weapon in bid to keep young safe in the workplace

THE British Safety Council has launched a new campaign to heighten awareness of workplace safety as more and more construction firms take on apprentices.

The Speak Up, Safe Stay campaign seeks to raise young people's awareness about workplace risks and what they should expect from employers.

Matthew Holder, campaigns manager at the British Safety Council, explained: ''We have created a film that will bring home the message that health and safety is not a bit of red tape but a very real part of any worker's skill base. Construction is a priority sector for us, reflecting the hazardous nature of the occupation.

''The film follows a young construction apprentice around a site as we listen to him describe what precautions to take to stay safe and healthy. It is freely available and we hope that apprentices and employers, or learning providers responsible for their training or induction, will make use of it.

''Bottom up awareness by workers of their own and others' health and safety is part of the solution to how we eradicate the scourge of senseless work-related injury and ill health.''

The campaign encourages youngsters to speak up and put confident communication at the heart of health and safety.

In addition to the film, there is a website containing useful information about hazards, risks, rights and responsibilities at work, films and factsheets for young people and employers.

There is also a free online game and app.

For details of the film find out more by visiting the British Safety Council's website at www.britsafe.org/speakupstaysafe.

The British Safety Council, a charity set up in the 1950s by its founder, James Tye, led to the creation of the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act and the introduction of car seat belts.



FILM: Apprenticeships are on the up prompting more safety steps

College to talk to minister over cuts

SKILLS minister Matthew Hancock is to talk with MidKent College about controversial plans to cut education funding for 18-year-olds by 17.5 per cent.

Such a move will hit further education colleges hard with a 3.4 per cent drop in income compared to 0.4 per cent for schools.

Principal Sue McLeod said: ''We need to speak out on behalf of 18-year-olds from some of the most deprived areas of Medway and Maidstone as they will suffer.''

Uni applications soar despite fees

APPLICATIONS to enrol on a course at the University of Kent have rocketed by some 8,000 over the last five years, despite the introduction of £9,000 per year course fees.

The latest figures from UCAS reveal 27,910 applications last year, compared to 19,824 in 2008. The number of students accepted has increased by just 500 over that same time.

» What is your business doing to help our young people? If you have a good-news story, email **editorial@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **01303 817100**.



What are options if big banks won't lend to your business?

By Geert Struyven

DESPITE lending to non-financial businesses falling by £4.7 billion in November 2013, market commentators have suggested the lending situation may improve as new 'challenger' banks such as Metro Bank, Virgin Money and Aldermore Bank provide a funding alternative.

I have yet to see any convincing evidence of their appetite to step in where the traditional or mainstream banks' offering stops.

If factoring or asset-based lending are not appropriate for your business and your bank has refused your application for new funding, or rejected your attempts to extend your existing lines of credit, what options are available?

A relatively new option is crowdfunding. With interest rates historically low, cash rich people want a return on their cash and are looking to invest. What started as a way of securing funding for charitable causes has been embraced by businesses.



LOANS: Geert Struyven

They can put out the opportunity to invest via crowdfunding websites. Individuals can choose to either lend money such as through Funding Circle, or buy equity, the model used by Crowdcube, on the basis of an idea, and fund its growth. In return the investors get a financial return, a share of the business or sometimes even future products. Crowdfunding has lower levels of regulation and may not be for everyone.

Businesses could also consider whether it can be sourced through debt funding, or whether it is an equity requirement. In the past, few business owners in need of capital have been willing to explore equity investment given the plentiful availability of debt. However, in 2013 we saw a significant increase in equity investments, especially in young and promising business ventures.

A new type of investor, corporate venture capital, has emerged, offering a wide variety of equity investment made by corporates. Unlike Venture Capital, which typically raises funds from pension funds or high net worth individuals, corporate venture capital combines the impact of an investor's strong corporate balance sheet with the commercial acumen and industry knowledge available within both businesses.

Corporate venture capitalists typically invest in early stage high-growth businesses in order to develop the strategic capabilities of the investor's business, and provide a financial return. While the deals talked about tend to be large high profile investments from the likes of Apple, Microsoft etc, we have also seen corporate venture capital investments in Kent's small business sector.

Regardless of the source of funding, the key is to seek out professional advice, especially when putting together a business plan to persuade funders to invest, and to examine all the opportunities available to fund growth.

■ **Geert Struyven is Corporate Finance Partner at Crowe Clark Whitehill, a leading national audit, tax and advisory firm with offices in Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone.**

No sting in the tail as capital loans project celebrates 50 clients



FANG YOU FOR THE LOAN: Canterbury's Venomtech has received cash

By Joe Bill
joe.bill@archant.co.uk

BUSINESS chiefs are heralding Expansion East Kent a success after the county's capital loans project took on its 50th client since it started in 2012.

The milestone has come two years after Kent County Council succeeded in applying for a £40 million slice of the Regional Growth Fund in an attempt to pump cash into the county's flagging businesses.

The first £5m was set aside for enhancements on the Ashford to Ramsgate rail line to improve speed and make east Kent more accessible from London.

The remaining £35m was set up as the Expansion East Kent programme offering both small and medium-sized businesses the chance to apply for cash with the idea of creating more jobs and expanding their operations.

More than two years on and KCC has handed out £19.3m to 54 Kent companies, creating 2,000 jobs.

The cash is handed over as an interest-free loan to both pre-start-up businesses and fully established companies as KCC attempts to boost the east Kent economy by 5,000 jobs, and unlock a possible £300m worth of further private sector investment.

From the start, priority sectors including tourism, scientific research and manufacturing were established, but businesses which have received a cash injection from the fund have included a health food company, manicurists, cupcake makers and even a brewery.

Leader of KCC Paul Carter said "It is outstanding that more than 50 businesses have made successful applications for funding and demonstrates the range and diversity of companies that are driving east Kent's economic resurgence.

"Most important of all, it gets money out of government coffers and into the control of the people who can make a difference on the ground like employers and entrepreneurs.

"We have long benefited from a vibrant business scene in east Kent, and this funding boost has played a major role in encouraging the growth of existing companies and the establishment of new start-ups."

> **"A zero per cent unsecured loan for a business is a fantastic opportunity, particularly to help keep science in the county"**

One company that has benefited from the fund is science group Venomtech.

Based in Canterbury, Venomtech has created the UK's only commercial venom laboratory.

The company supplies the pharmaceutical industry with the venom from snakes, scorpions and spiders for research into pain relief, antibiotics and even the fight against cancer.

The laboratory is home to more than 50 species of poisonous animal and a £100,000 loan from Expansion East Kent means the company will soon be taking on more staff.

Managing director Steve Trim was delighted to secure the funding.

He said: "A zero per cent unsecured loan for a business is a fantastic opportunity, particularly to help keep science in the county.

"The money means we can take on more staff, improve the profitability of our products and the rate at which we can push them out."

The loan's pay-back rate is determined by the success of the business and the company's monthly outgoings.

And there is still £15m available to east Kent businesses looking to expand.

However, Expansion East Kent operates on a match-funding basis so the scheme can only contribute up to 50 per cent of a company's capital needs for a non-priority sector business, but it will contribute up to 70 per cent for a business that falls within a priority industry.

The rest of a company's cash must come from other sources, usually private investment.

One of the companies to receive a substantial loan from the scheme and get match funding is South East Bottling.

The Broadstairs plant, which opened in May 2013, bottles beer for breweries across the region.

Expansion East Kent contributed £170,000 to the project. Head brewer Eddie Gadd said "Our big worry was getting hold of the money, but once we secured funding we knew we had a good business.

"The loan from Expansion East Kent helped to unlock the loan from HSBC which allowed us to invest in the equipment we needed."

HIGHS AND LOWS OF SITE FIRST BOUGHT IN 1909



ROCHESTER Airport has been at its current site since 1909, when the-then Rochester City Council bought land from a local farmer.

One month later, the famous Short Brothers began test flights from the airfield, which they used in conjunction with the aircraft they were building on Sheppey.

Around 1934 the Shorts took over the airfield, moving some of their Sheppey operation to the site. Civilian flights from Rochester to Southend got under way in that year, charging 60p for a return flight.

In 1938, hangers were built for use by the RAF and a flying school was established.

During May 1940, the airfield was severely damaged during a bombing raid by Dornier Do 17 bombers - the same type of aircraft recovered at the Goodwin Sands in Deal last summer.

The Shorts left the area to move their operations to Belfast in 1946, but the flying school continued in Medway, with the lease reverting back to the council in 1979.

Despite threats of closure, the airport continued after being taken over by GEC Marconi, which in 1991 was itself taken over by BAE Systems.

The lease was then taken over by Rochester Airport Ltd, which has been looking to renovate the site. It is currently in the third of a five-year lease with the council.

« Continued from page 53

potential to create 1,000 new skilled jobs. However, there are no plans to develop Rochester Airport into a commercial airport.

Deputy leader of Medway Council and finance chief Alan Jarrett said: "Rochester Airport is an important asset for Medway and securing its future will help contribute to the regeneration and economic development of Medway.

"We want to ensure the future of the airport by maximising its potential for jobs and tourism and that's what the masterplan does.

"The potential for new jobs here is just one of many benefits this masterplan brings."



skilful Kent

Advertisers' Announcement

It is never too late to develop your skill set and there are plenty of

Thinking of a new life? Then here could be your answer

IF a new career is what you are looking out for, read on. If it isn't, read on anyway… you might have a friend who is on the brink of a change and we may be able to help.

The UK's transport industry, both passenger and freight, is still tens of thousands of drivers short of recruitable staff. When you think of transport, it is usual to think 'drivers', but there are other opportunities such as warehousing, office staff and even marketing to make it worth exploring.

To gain a recognisable licence to operate in warehousing, the cost may be very small, (£200-£300) or more for a totally new recruit.

On the driving side of the industry, all licences are useful, from a B+E (car & trailer) category C1 (7.5-tonne), C1+E (7.5- with trailer), full-sized HGV Rigid (category C) and finally C+E, which is an articulated truck up to any weight permitted to be carried on a public road.

In the passenger-carrying side of transport, the licence required would be a D1 (minibus) or a D (full-sized bus or coach).

It has been announced that auto and manual will soon be integrated, but ring us to find out more.

Kent Metro Ltd is one of the industry's oldest-established companies in the south of England and proud to have completed 50 years in the training industry (est. 1963). We hope the next 50 years will be equally as exciting.

What to look for when selecting a training company:

1) Training facilities: classroom, reversing area, rest room *etc.*
2) Is my instructor qualified?
3) How long is a day? Two hours? Four hours? We think a day is a minimum of eight hours.
4) Is my training one-to-one, or will I be sharing with other drivers?
5) Go and look at your chosen trainer; do not assume their website is fair and accurately described. You could find they park in the street and don't have a reversing area.
6) Does my chosen trainer charge VAT? If not, they are not doing much business or are new to the industry.
7) Will I get extra help from my trainer to prepare for the theory tests?
8) Do not use agencies: you must have read the horror stories.

Above are a few pointers to help you choose a trainer. Take your time. Kent Metro Ltd meets all the criteria and can guarantee a job interview at no extra cost.

We will not be beaten on price.

Colleges welcomes new deputy principal Rhiannon



NORTH West Kent College is pleased to welcome new deputy principal Rhiannon Hughes.

The former Great Britain softball captain and secondary-school head-teacher is looking forward to a new challenge and to helping NWKC become Outstanding.

Predominantly educated in America, Rhiannon has experienced a very different educational culture and sees the need to make learning more exciting. She said: "My aim is to work alongside the tutors at NWKC to help develop the teaching and learning.

"We need to be creative and confident and take risks, to ensure a 'wow' in learning within our classrooms."

Rhiannon officially started on November 11 last year, taking over from Penny Morgan, who has started a new position as principal of Epping Forest College in Essex.

North West Kent College has its next open day on Wednesday, March 12, from 3pm-8pm.

For more information on the open day and to find out about the courses on offer, visit www.nwkcollege.ac.uk or phone 0800 074 1447.

Pictured are Shiarna Crawford, Jordan Whincup, Tom Munson, Rhiannon Hughes, Chris McNeil, Linsey Fry and Helen Turner.





You can make a difference in a young person's life

WHO Are Supported Fostering Services?

"Every 22 minutes a child comes into care and needs a foster family."

Supported Fostering Services is a family-orientated non-profit-making charitable organisation established for 20 years and rated Outstanding by Ofsted.

It is for this exact reason that Supported Fostering Services is dedicated to providing high-quality fostering placements through an excellent matching process within the local community.

We work in partnership with foster-carers and local authorities to enable children and young people to grow, develop and achieve their full potential within a stable, caring family environment.



Recruiting new foster-carers

It is a common misconception that foster-carers are required to be married, have children of their own or have their own home.

In reality, the role of a foster-carer is open to anyone of any age, gender and ethnicity, providing they have a spare bedroom and want to make a difference in a child's life.

People from all walks of life can make excellent foster-carers. Whatever their background or experience, they need one crucial quality: the ability to understand and meet the needs of looked-after children and young people.

Our whole assessment process is therefore geared to finding people with these specific qualities to give our children the best care.

We believe that children should have the opportunity to live in a happy family environment that values their identity and background, as well as encouraging them to succeed and reach their full potential.

Supported Fostering Services is committed to providing a first-class support service to its foster-carers, with all carers undergoing continuous training and access to 24-hour support.

"The quality of care is exceptional; children and young people are thriving within safe, loving households following excellent matching practice" – **Ofsted, 2011**

For more information on what is involved and how to become a foster-carer, please visit www.fostering.com or email enquiries@fostering.com.

MidKent College to discuss funding cuts with Minister

SKILLS Minister Matthew Hancock will talk with MidKent College about controversial plans to cut education funding for 18-year-olds.

Last month the Government announced proposals for a reduction of 17.5 per cent for 18-year-olds from this September – a cut that will affect further-education colleges far worse than school sixth forms.

While school sixth forms will experience an average reduction in funding of just 0.4 per cent, for FE colleges like MidKent the number is much higher at 3.4 per cent.

According to a Government impact assessment, the reduction is also due to have a disproportionate effect on students from disadvantaged and BME (black, minority and ethnic) groups who are statistically more likely to have left school with relatively low attainment and who therefore need to complete further study programmes before progressing to work, apprenticeships or higher education.

The assessment also reveals that 18-year-olds on vocational courses like plumbing and hairdressing will be impacted to a greater extent than those taking A-levels.

Responding to a question by Gillingham and Rainham MP Rehman Chishti in the House of Commons, Mr Hancock said he would "absolutely ensure" that a discussion took place between MidKent College representatives and himself about the proposals.

MidKent College principal Sue McLeod said: "The planned funding cut for 18-year-olds will have a hugely disproportionate effect on further-education colleges and is simply unfair.

"We have almost 1,000 students aged 18 at the college, so a funding cut of £700-£800 per head equates to about £800,000 in total.

"The Government says it wants all young people to leave school with good standards of English and maths but is removing a large chunk of the funding that pays for those extra qualifications to be taught in FE colleges."

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Seat lays on more style

VW's Spanish arm recovers its brio with a trio of Leon models now crowned by the stylish ST – a car **Steve Loader** describes as a sporting estate of space

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

Preview

Seat Leon ST

Price:	from £15,370
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★★
Best rival:	VW Golf

» Read more of Steve's motoring reviews in… KENT LIFE

» For more cars visit drive24.co.uk
Powered by MOTORS Search Smart, Buy Right .co.uk

AFTER some rocky years, Seat roared back in 2013 with a near-17 per cent growth in UK sales and recorded its best-ever market share (2 per cent).

It followed a reckless fling as the VW group's 'Sporty Spice', during which sales success failed to emulate good performances on the track.

A rethink followed and, without extravagant announcements, the new thrust of SEAT's marketing seems to be style to complement brand sisters VW (mainstream/premium), Audi (premium) and Skoda (value/no nonsense).

Underlining this, VW's Spanish arm has just launched arguably the mainstream market's best-looking estate, the Leon ST, the initials standing for sports tourer – few carmakers like the blue-collar label 'estate' any more.

It was on the cards, of course: Seat launched its third-generation Leon five-door hatch last year to much acclaim.

This time, though, Seat said the Leon hatchback would not stand alone, following up with a glorious and even more rakish three-door SC, and now the practical yet eye-catching ST.

Priced from just £16,675 for the lively 105PS (103bhp) turbocharged petrol 1.2-litre entry model, you'd be wrong if you thought the car's looks flattered to deceive, for this is a practical estate to seduce the many who have tired of drab and unwieldy MPVs but still want generous stowage.

Other view…

the Petrolhead
Leon Cupra and FR models have been under-rated hot-hatch stars, and this is a true sporting estate with decent load space.

the Woman Driver
I'm not an estate-car fan, but this looks classy and sporty; the mix of practicality and style really could tempt me

the Eco-warrior
Ecomotive versions just go to prove that a car can look good and still be more eco-friendly. How far away is a 100mpg Leon now?





SPORTING: Seat's new Leon ST is an estate – sorry, sports tourer – offering an appealing mix of driver appeal, style and, most importantly, usable space

It will also suit buyers wanting to downsize from the standard family or Mondeo class, which has become increasingly bulky.

The ST boot is 587 litres and there's an impressive 1,470-litre cargo area with rear seats folded flat; both figures trump most rivals and Seat's larger and recently-dropped Exeo ST model, though they fall some way short of the cavernous VW Golf Estate (605/1620 litres).

Then again, where else will you get so much affordable load-lugging executed with such style?

The key to it all, of course, is the new estate rear end grafted on to the original Leon hatchback design. It mimics the donor car's rakish roofline and adds 27cm to the length but little extra weight due to the overall lightness of the Leon.

This also has the effect of delivering similar crisp handling to the existing hatchback and SC versions.

But what I most like about the ST's styling is the way the sharp side creases – such a hallmark of the new Leon line-up – have been wrapped around the car's rear rather than lost in the kind of utilitarian bob used on so many estates.

It is detail applied to a premium-price lifestyle estate with far less real usability than the capacious Leon.

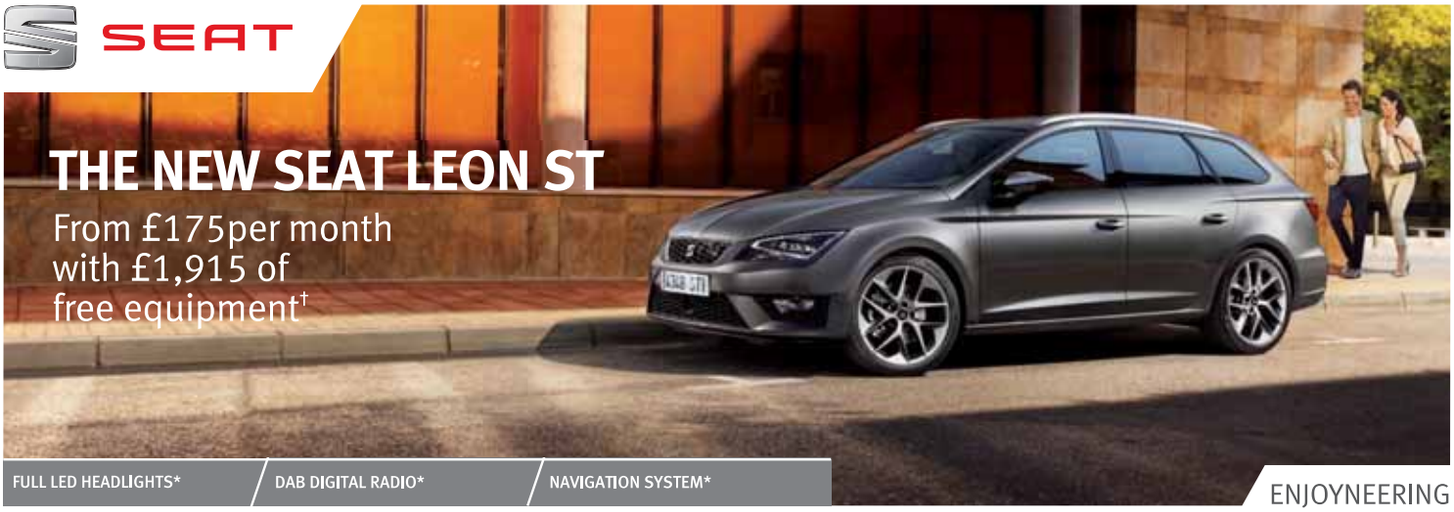
As you would expect from any VW group model at this level, there is no shortage of engine options, and the choice includes one wearing Seat's ultra-green Ecomotive badge.

The ST 1.6TDI Ecomotive (£20,485) offers a staggering official combined-cycle consumption figure of 85.6mpg and is also one of several ST variants with CO_2 emissions low enough to limbo beneath the 100g/km bar and qualify for zero road tax.

However, as I continually say for VW group models: don't ignore the excellent small-capacity turbocharged petrol units.

These 1.2- and 1.4-litre engines are cheaper to buy and have low emissions, though none will escape road tax. They also bestow a lighter touch to the car's handling than a heavier diesel lump would do, which usually makes them nicer to drive.

SEAT



THE NEW SEAT LEON ST

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New SEAT Leon ST 1.2 TSI SE (with Technology Pack) - Solutions representative example based on 10,000 miles per annum^

Duration:	36 months	Retail cash price:	£17,795.00	Acceptance fee¹:	£125.00	Total amount payable:	£19,239.23	Rate of interest:	4.10% fixed
35 monthly payments of:	£175.00	SEAT UK Deposit Contribution**	£1,000.00	Optional final payment:	£7,956.52	Amount of credit:	£12,822.29		
Customer deposit:	£3,972.71	Total deposit amount	£4,972.71	Option to purchase fee²:	£60.00	Representative APR:	4.9% APR		

4.9% APR representative plus **£1,000** towards your deposit**

FOLLOW US ON: SEAT.CO.UK

Official fuel consumption for the SEAT Leon ST range in mpg (litres per 100km); urban 36.7 (7.7) - 72.4 - (3.9); extra urban 57.6 (4.9) - 91.1 (3.1); combined 47.9 (5.9) - 85.6 (3.3). CO_2 emissions 137-87g/km. Standard EU Test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

Offer applies to Leon ST 1.2 TSI SE (with Technology Pack), ordered and registered between 1st January and 31st March 2014. Model shown is a Leon ST 1.2 TSI SE in optional Technic Grey metallic paint at £450 RRP. †£1,915 RRP refers to optional specification if priced individually. *Subject to model variant specification and option fitment **£1,000 Deposit Contribution is available to customers who purchase their car with Solutions personal contract plan. The new Leon ST 1.2 TSI SE exmple includes Technology Pack. Retail Sales only. Subject to vehicle availability. ¹Payable as first payment ²Payable with optional final payment. ^4.4p per mile, excess mileage charges apply. Further charges may be payable if vehicle is returned. Offers may be varied or withdrawn at any time. All figures inclusive of VAT. Terms and conditions apply. Finance Subject to status. Indemnities may be required. Available to over 18's in the UK from participating dealers only. SEAT Finance, Freepost, SEAT Finance. Finance providers may pay us for introducing you to them.

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WORKHORSE: A radical facelift last year gave the Hyundai i20 a sharper and neater front end. Inside you get good space and bulletproof fittings

Distinctive i20 standing out in supermini crowd

New World Rally Car spin-off really adds glamour to Hyundai's 'workhorse' i20 supermini model after its all-round facelift last year, writes **Steve Loader**

AFTER a decade-long absence, Hyundai has just rejoined the gruelling World Rally Championship (WRC).

And the Korean brand's choice for this ultimate test for roadgoing cars is the humble i20 supermini, subject to the usual injection of steroids all rallycars get before competing.

It's a bit of glamour the everyday i20 can do with; it's now the oldest car in the brand line-up, having been launched in 2009, although, to be fair, the Hyundai range is one of the youngest on the market.

The i20 also had a radical facelift last year that freshened distinctive looks, already highlighted by a unique crease along its flanks that sweeps downwards dramatically at the tail.

Any styling effort to stand out in a rather crowded and uniform sector of the market deserves some applause, and that facelift has also given the i20 a much sharper yet neater front end.

Available as a three- or five-door, it is also well priced from £10,095, following in the footsteps of its successful predecessor, the Getz, which was the breakthrough model for Hyundai on the UK market.

Within the i20's distinctive body, you get a cabin that is one of the roomiest in the supermini class, though there is a suspicion that the excellent rear legroom is bought at the price of some boot space, which is only average for a supermini.

As ever with Hyundai these days, the fixtures and fittings feel bulletproof though perhaps a little unyielding, even on the test car, which was kitted out with flagship Style trim.

This puts it rather in the shade of sector leaders like the UK's best-selling car, the Ford Fiesta, and the VW Polo, but there is a price differential here.

The i20 also comes with a decent level of standard kit, including air-con – usually charged as extra on entry- or low-level supermini models.

Then there's the Hyundai five-year/unlimited mileage warranty that puts the three-year/60K market norm to shame.

And it's not as if the i20 feels like a Far East product of old; Hyundai's 'i' range of mainstream cars has changed perceptions of the brand.

Though I suspect the brand's marketing people intended to piggyback on Apple's 'i' tech products, Hyundai could just as easily have inverted the vowel as an exclamation mark, for that has been the effect of this new-generation European-designed and developed range.

This comes through in the dynamics of the i20, which, not quite German or British in feel, has a pleasing French touch to it. Comfort was definitely the priority, but the overall handling is precise and were it not for rather vague gearshifting and steering you could throw the car around with enthusiasm.

As it is, it easily qualifies as a good all-rounder and there is also a good range of environmentally-friendly and frugal engines.

If you want to go ultra eco, then most versions with the 1.1- and 1.4-litre diesel motors escape road tax due to sub-100g/km CO_2 emissions, but you'll pay a premium for them that will take many miles to recoup through tax and fuel savings, and the 74bhp 1.1 is a bit gutless (0-62mph in 15.7 seconds).

Which leaves you with the choice of two petrol engines: the big-selling 84bhp 1.2-litre and a 99bhp 1.4-litre. The latter is obviously the livelier of the two (0-62mph in 11.6 seconds), but the former is less than a second slower to the same mark, yet cheaper to buy and about 5mpg a gallon better on fuel if you go by the official combined figure of 57.6mpg.



KMI

Hyundai 1.2 Style five-door

Price:	£12,495
Driving appeal:	★★★
Image:	★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★★
Reliability:	★★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Road tax:	£30/year (£0 year one)
Best rival:	Ford Fiesta

Kent dealers

Motorline Hyundai:

Canterbury	01227 817555
Maidstone	01622 624070

Tunbridge Wells Hyundai:

Tun' Wells	01892 520026

Grays Hyundai:

Chatham	01634 408408



Panda 4x4 hits 30

AS Kent's winter thermostat drops, Fiat has launched a limited edition of its excellent Panda 4x4.

The Antarctica (from £14,895) also marks 30 years of Panda 4x4 models and stands out in white with black roof, orange detailing, diamond-finish 15-inch alloys and special badges.

This special edition also has grey and orange seats and many extras, plus the usual Panda 4x4 mud and snow tyres and rugged bodywork protection.



Lexus offers boost

LEXUS has revised its petrol-electric hybrid CT200h executive hatchback yet cut prices by up to £1,500.

The new-look range also now starts at £20,995 – £1,000 less than before – or from £219 per month with Lexus Business Drive Contract Hire.

Toyota's luxury arm says its entry-model line-up has improved styling, handling, equipment and tax efficiency, too, with all models below the road-tax-exempt 100g/km CO_2 emissions threshold.



VR7 value with Kia

KIA has launched high-spec, high-value VR7 special editions of its Picanto city car, Rio supermini, and Ceed family hatch and SW estate.

All are also available with a £1,000 discount, low rate 4.9 per cent APR finance and optional Care-3 all-inclusive servicing for just £99 and come with Kia's industry-leading seven-year/100K mileage warranty.

Standard VR7 kit includes air-con, alloys, reversing sensors, electrically-adjustable heated door mirrors and all-electric windows.

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CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: Friday 14th February 2014

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Evidence of continual professional development
Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/ medical procedures
To discuss these opportunities or to arrange an informal visit, please contact Liz Justice – 01233 616202 Ext: 86202

For job description and application form please contact:
Jo Wright
East Kent Medical Services Ltd, Spencer Private Hospital
Ramsgate Road, Margate, Kent CT9 4BG
Telephone: 01304 245961 Fax: 01304 207320
E-mail: joanne.wright@spencerhospitals.com

Swale ACADEMIES TRUST

Westlands School, Sittingbourne Community College, Meopham School, Westlands Primary School and Regis Manor Primary School

Interested in a career in teaching?

We are holding an information evening for School Direct Teacher Training within Swale Academies Trust

Monday 24 February 2014
at Westlands School, Westlands Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1PF

Drop in between 5.00 - 7.30 pm,
to meet Trust representatives and current trainees.

Swale Academies Trust, working in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University, invites high quality graduates interested in a career in teaching to consider the School Direct Training Programme 2014/15. We have places available under both School Direct training routes, some salaried and some which may be eligible for a training bursary or scholarship, subject to status.

Please visit our website for further details
www.swaleacademiestrust.org.uk

Swale Academies Trust has an excellent reputation for high quality teacher training within a friendly and supportive environment. This is an excellent opportunity to acquire practical teaching experience under the guidance of highly skilled and dedicated professionals. Westlands School, the lead training school, is an outstanding school as recognised by Ofsted.

For preliminary enquiries you are welcome to e mail:
schooldirect@westlands.kent.sch.uk

School Direct applications can only be made through UCAS Teacher Training, www.ucas.com/teacher-training

Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All staff are subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Trust Principal: Mr J Whitcombe MA

Swale Academies Trust Company No 7344732
Registered Office: Ashdown House, Johnson Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1JS

Canterbury Christ Church University

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Team Leaders and Support Workers
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- Salary dependent on experience.

An exciting opportunity has arisen for support workers and team leaders to work in a new service scheduled to open in April 2014 in a 8 bedded Residential care home for adults with Autistic Spectrum Condition, learning disabilities and challenging behaviour in Maidstone, Kent, for Craegmoor, part of the Priory Group.

For an informal discussion or for an application form, please contact Blessings Phakathi on: 07715063228 or email blessingsphakathi@priorygroup.com

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Canterbury
Kent CT2 8AE

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Swale ACADEMIES TRUST

Incorporating Westlands School, The Sittingbourne Community College, Meopham School, The Chaucer School, Westlands Primary School and Regis Manor Primary School

Premises Manager

Required for April 2014
Salary £41,938 – 49,120 pa

We are seeking to appoint a Premises Manager to provide site management services to the Trust's properties which include 4 secondary and 2 primary schools.

We are looking to appoint a professional who has previous relevant experience in premises management.

The ideal candidate will:

- be flexible and motivated, with experience in facilities management, budget management, project management and health & safety
- have experience of procurement and grant applications
- be able to identify areas for improvement, planning a way forward and implementing change which will be a key part of the role

Recruitment packs are available from Westlands School or online (www.westlands.org.uk). A covering letter of application should be included with your application form as well as a CV. Please note that CVs sent without an application form will not be considered.

Closing date: 10 February 2014

Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Contact Details:
Westlands School
Westlands Avenue, Sittingbourne,
Kent ME10 1PF
Tel: 01795 477475 Fax: 01795 479461
Email swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk
Trust Principal: Mr J Whitcombe MA

Swale Academies Trust Company No 7344732
Registered Office: Ashdown House, Johnson Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1JS

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1 Year Fixed Term Contract

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- **Are you a motivated individual, who is industrious & self driven**
- **Do you have the ability to get the best out of a young person?**
- **Do you have good IT skills?**

If you feel that you can answer 'Yes' to all of the above, Northfleet Technology College is the place for you!

An opportunity for a General Support Assistant position has arisen, with duties similar to that of a Teaching Assistant.

The working hours are 27.5 hours per week, Term Time (38 weeks per annum) for an initial 1 years fixed term

contract. The salary is commensurate to these terms.

Appointment will be subject to satisfactory safeguarding & vetting checks including references & a Fully Enhanced CRB.

Please contact the School Office for an Application Form & further information about the position.

Closing date: Tuesday 25 February 2014

Further details are available from Miss E Stuart
Email: office@ntc.kent.sch.uk
Web: www.ntc.kent.sch.uk
Tel: 01474 533802
Head: Jane Partridge

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The School has approval status from the Department of Children, School & Families and has an excellent rapport with parents and the L.A.

Due to continuing development we require the following teachers:-

ART TEACHER
TEACHER – Lead Maths within Post 16
TEACHER – Lead English within Post 16

- excellent specialist subject knowledge, skills and experience of teaching
- develop an innovative and creative learning environment
- have the ability work effectively within a team
- teach across ability range in KS3 & KS4 – up to A Level
- posts are available as from April 2014
- salary scale M1 to M6 + SEN1

Application form and Job Descriptions can be found on our website **www.westheathschool.com**

or contact **lynne.mcgrath@westheathschool.com**

Closing date 12 February 2014

Enhanced DBS check will be requested.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

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www.marshacademy.org.uk
Principal – Shaun Simmons

WOULD YOU LIKE TO TURN YOUR DEGREE INTO A TEACHING QUALIFICATION?

The Marsh Academy has an excellent reputation for training teachers. We have a non-salary school direct placements starting in September 2014 in Mathematics & Science.

Applicants must have a relevant degree and some experience of working with children, although working in an educational setting would be advantageous.

The application process for the School Direct route into teaching is significantly different this year. Applications must be made via the UCAS website: http://www.ucas.com/apply Applications can be made up to 15th September 2014, however our interview process will commence in February '14 so, candidates are advised to apply as soon as possible.

This post is subject to an Enhanced Check with the Disclosure & Barring Scheme (DBS).

Kent Council · Microsoft

For further details and an application pack, please contact Jackie Addison by telephone or email.

Cambridge Education Group

Chef

20 hrs Part-Time/Job Share

CATS Canterbury is an independent Sixth Form College offering a broad range of pre-university programmes to international students supported by English language courses and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We are currently seeking an enthusiastic and reliable Chef to join our committed team in a busy kitchen environment, catering for up to 600 boarding students per sitting for breakfast, lunch and evening meals.

Applicants must hold a City & Guilds 706 I and City & Guilds 706 II certificate or a NVQ Level 2 Professional Chef qualification and a working knowledge of HACCP. The post operates on a shift basis of 20 hours per week worked over a variety of days, including some weekends and evenings.

The main duties of this post will include:

- Day to day running of and cooking in the kitchen
- Maintaining and order stock
- Day to day training and guidance of staff
- Maintain the high level of hygiene standards
- Front of house service

If you would like to apply for this post please visit our website www.ceg-uk.com to download an application form and job description. All candidates must complete an application form as CV's cannot be accepted for this post.

Applications should be submitted to:

Marion Wigington – HR Officer, CATS College, 68 New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 3LQ or by email at recruitment@catscanterbury.com

The closing date for all applications is Mid-day Friday 7th February 2014

Previous applicants need not apply.

CATS College Canterbury is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Since this post gives potential candidates significant access to young people, candidates are required under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, if offered an appointment, to disclose details of all previous convictions including spent convictions.

CATS Canterbury is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to treating all applicants and employees in the same way regardless of race or colour, nationality or national or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, sex or marital status, sexual orientation, disability or age.

CATS CANTERBURY
Cambridge Arts & Sciences

CATS College Canterbury

School Nurse – RGN Maternity Cover

Part time – 8.30am – 12.30pm Monday – Thursday - Term Time Only

CATS Canterbury is an independent Sixth Form College offering a broad range of pre-university programmes to international students supported by English language courses and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We are currently seeking to recruit a part-time registered nurse to assist with the day-to-day running of our student medical centre and provide support and advice to our students on a range of medical issues.

The post holder will work with the Medical Officer and be a point of contact for assessment, treatment, care and referral of students at CATS Canterbury and Stafford House School of English, supporting our policies on duty of care and behaviour.

The ideal candidate will need to be hands on and possess a professional caring attitude and a good sense of customer service.

Candidates should be motivated, professional, energetic and enthusiastic individuals who are able to establish a good rapport with young people and have a caring attitude towards others.

For an application form and job description please visit our website www.ceg-uk.com/en/static/jobs or contact Marion Wigington – HR Officer at MWigington@catscanterbury.com

Please note we are unable to accept CV's without a completed application form.

The closing date for all applications will be 7th February 2014

CATS College Canterbury is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Since this post gives potential candidates significant access to young people candidates are required under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, if offered an appointment, to disclose details of all previous convictions including spent convictions.

CATS Canterbury is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to treating all applicants and employees in the same way regardless of race or colour, nationality or national or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, sex or marital status, sexual orientation, disability or age.

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PROW – IN THE BOROUGH OF ASHFORD

NOTICE OF PUBLIC PATH ORDER
HIGHWAYS ACT 1980
WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY AW376, KINGSNORTH PUBLIC PATH CREATION AND DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT MODIFICATION ORDER 2014

The above Order made on the 22nd January 2014 under Section 26 of the Highways Act 1980 will add a new length of Public Bridleway numbered AW376, which commences from a point on Pound Lane at grid reference TQ 9991 3957 (Point A), heading in a north westerly direction for 293 metres, to re-join Pound Lane at grid reference TQ 9969 3973 (Point B), opposite the established cycle track exiting Lucilla Avenue. The new length of Public Bridleway crosses the existing line of Public Footpath AW298 at grid reference TQ 9969 3971 (Point C) 273 metres from TQ 9991 3957 (Point A), which in effect is upgraded to Public Bridleway status by this Order.

The new length of Public Bridleway numbered AW376 is to be 3 metres wide.

All directions general, all distances approximate.

A copy of the Order and the Map have been placed and may be seen free of charge at the Offices of Ashford Borough Council, Ashford Gateway Plus, Church Road, Ashford, TN23 1AS or at the Kent County Council, Countryside Access Service, Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX, during office hours. Copies of the Order and Map may be purchased there at the price of £5.

Any representation about or objection to the Order may be sent in writing to Colin Finch at the Kent County Council (address as below) (Tel: 01622 221568) (email: colin.finch@kent.gov.uk) not later than 3rd March 2014. Please state the grounds on which they are made.

Please note that objections/representations cannot be treated as confidential and may come into the public domain. Copies of any objections or representations received may be disclosed to interested parties, including the Planning Inspectorate where the case is referred to it for determination.

If no representations or objections are duly made, or if any so made are withdrawn, the Kent County Council may confirm the Order as an unopposed Order. If the Order is sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment for confirmation any representations and objections which have not been withdrawn will be sent with the Order.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC PATH ORDER
HIGHWAYS ACT 1980
WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PUBLIC FOOTPATHS AW222 (PART), AW298 (PART) KINGSNORTH PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION AND DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT MODIFICATION ORDER 2014

The above named Order made on the 22nd January 2014 under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 will divert the entire width of **(a)** that length of public footpath numbered AW222 that commences from the unaffected part of public footpath AW222 at grid reference NGR TQ9926 3988 (Point A), and passes for 200 metres in a South Easterly direction to grid reference NGR TQ9940 3975 (Point K), then turning and continuing in a South South Easterly direction for 28 metres to a connection with Restricted Byway AW299A at grid reference NGR TQ9942 3972 (Point C) as shown on the Order plan;

and **(b)** that length of public footpath numbered AW298 that commences from it's junction with Restricted Byway AW299A at grid reference NGR TQ9942 3972 (Point C), and passes for 265 metres in an Easterly direction to a connection with the unaffected part of public footpath AW298 at grid reference NGR TQ9968 3971 (Point B) as shown on the Order plan.

A new length of public footpath will be added **(a)** numbered AW222 that commences from the unaffected part of public footpath AW222, at grid reference NGR TQ9926 3988 (Point A), and passes in a North Easterly direction for 18 metres to grid reference NGR TQ9927 3990 (Point I) then turning in a East South Easterly direction for 172 metres to grid reference NGR TQ9943 3985 (Point G), before continuing in a South Easterly direction for 6 metres and turning again in an East South Easterly direction and crossing over a bridge at grid reference NGR TQ9944 3984 (Point F) on which the width is reduced to approximately 740mm, then continuing in a North Easterly direction for 6 metres to grid reference NGR TQ9945 3985 (Point H), then finally turning in an East South Easterly direction for 10 metres before making a connection with Restricted Byway AW299A, at grid reference NGR TQ9946 3984 (Point D) as shown on the Order plan. The new length of path will have a width of 2 metres other than to cross a bridge where it is reduced to 740mm;

and a new length of public footpath **(b)** numbered AW298 that commences at a new connection with Restricted Byway AW299A, at grid reference NGR TQ9946 3984 (Point E), and passes in an East South Easterly direction for 180 metres to grid reference NGR TQ9963 3979 (Point J), and continues for 92 metres in a South Easterly direction to rejoin the unaffected part of public footpath AW298 at grid reference NGR TQ9968 3971(Point B) as shown on the Order plan. The new length of path will have a width of 2 metres.

All directions general, all distances approximate.

A copy of the Order and the Map have been placed and may be seen free of charge at the Offices of Ashford Borough Council, Ashford Gateway Plus, Church Road, Ashford, TN23 1AS or at the Kent County Council, Countryside Access Service, Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX, during office hours. Copies of the Order and Map may be purchased there at the price of £5.

Any representations about or objections to the Order may be sent in writing to Colin Finch at the Kent County Council (address as below) (email: colin.finch@kent.gov.uk) not later than 3rd March 2014. Please state the grounds on which they are made.

Please note that objections/representations cannot be treated as confidential and may come into the public domain. Copies of any objections or representations received may be disclosed to interested parties, including the Planning Inspectorate where the case is referred to it for determination.

If no such representations or objections are duly made, or if any so made are withdrawn, the Kent County Council may confirm the Order as an unopposed Order. If the Order is sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment for confirmation any representations and objections which have not been withdrawn will be sent with the Order.

PROW – IN THE CITY OF CANTERBURY

NOTICE OF THE MAKING OF AN ORDER TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE PUBLIC FOOTPATHS CB511 AND CB61

PUBLIC FOOTPATHS CB511 AND CB61 (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1), AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Kent County Council has made an Order the effect of which is to temporarily close Public Footpaths CB511 & CB61, between Merchants Way and Whitehall Road from the 27th January 2014.

The path will be closed for a maximum of six months, although it is expected that it will reopen sooner.

The path is closed because surface improvements works are being carried out and there is a likelihood of danger to users.

There is no alternative route.

For detailed enquiries please contact Melvyn Twycross

Contact Centre no. 03000 417171

Or for further details on temporary closures on the Rights of Way network see:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/countryside_access/traffic_regulation_orders.aspx

PROW – IN THE DISTRICT OF DOVER

NOTICE OF THE MAKING OF AN ORDER TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE PUBLIC FOOTPATH EB10
PUBLIC FOOTPATH EB10 (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1), AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Kent County Council has made an Order the effect of which is to temporarily close Public Footpath EB10, between its junction with St. Davids Avenue and its junction with Old Folkstone Road from the 27th January 2014.

The path will be closed for a maximum of six months.

The path is closed because construction works are planned adjacent to it and there is a likelihood of danger to users.

The alternative route is via, St. Davids Avenue, St. Giles Road and Old Folkstone Road and will be signed for the duration of the closure.

For detailed enquiries please contact Denise Roffey

Contact Centre no. 03000 417171

Or for further details on temporary closures on the Rights of Way network see:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/countryside_access/traffic_regulation_orders.aspx

NOTICE OF THE INTENTION TO MAKE AN ORDER TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE PUBLIC FOOTPATH EE291 IN THE PARISH OF AYLESHAM

PUBLIC FOOTPATH EE291 (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1), AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Kent County Council intends to temporarily close Public Footpath EE291, from its junction with Cornwallis Avenue to its junction with EE291A from the 13th February 2014.

The path will be closed for a maximum of six months, although it is expected that it will reopen after 6 weeks.

The path is to be closed because resurfacing works are planned and there is a likelihood of danger to users.

The alternative route is via Burgess Road, Public Footpath EE290 and Cornwallis Avenue and will be signed for the duration of the closure.

For detailed enquiries please contact Tom Kennedy

Contact Centre no. 03000 417171

Or for further details on temporary closures on the Rights of Way network see:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/countryside_access/traffic_regulation_orders.aspx

PROW – IN THE BOROUGH OF MAIDSTONE

NOTICE OF THE MAKING OF AN ORDER TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE PUBLIC FOOTPATH KM59 IN THE PARISH OF LOOSE

PUBLIC FOOTPATH KM59 (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1), AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Kent County Council has made an Order the effect of which is to temporarily close Public Footpath KM59, between its junction with Salts Lane and its junction with Public Footpath KM57 from the 26th January 2014.

The path will be closed for a maximum of six months.

The path is closed because works to assess and repair the footpath after a landslide are to be undertaken and there is a likelihood of danger to users.

There is no alternative route.

For detailed enquiries please contact David Munn

Contact Centre no. 03000 417171

Or for further details on temporary closures on the Rights of Way network see:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/countryside_access/traffic_regulation_orders.aspx

PROW – IN THE DISTRICT OF SWALE

NOTICE OF THE MAKING OF AN ORDER TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE RESTRICTED BYWAYS ZSX47 & ZSX48 IN THE PARISH OF SHEERNESS

RESTRICTED BYWAYS ZSX47 & ZSX48 (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1), AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Kent County Council has made an Order the effect of which is to temporarily close Restricted Byways ZSX47 & ZSX48 between the junction with Public Footpath ZSX46 and the junction with Beach Street, from the 27th January 2014.

The path will be closed for a maximum of six months, although it is expected that it will reopen sooner.

The path is to be closed because sea defence repair works are planned near it and there is a likelihood of danger to users.

There is no alternative route.

For detailed enquiries please contact Michael Ellis

Contact Centre no. 03000 417171

Or for further details on temporary closures on the Rights of Way network see:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/countryside_access/traffic_regulation_orders.aspx

PROW – IN THE DISTRICT OF THANET

NOTICE OF THE MAKING OF AN ORDER TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE PUBLIC FOOTPATH TR23 IN THE PARISH OF MANSTON

PUBLIC FOOTPATH TR23 (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1), AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Kent County Council has made an Order the effect of which is to temporarily close Public Footpath TR23, for its entire length between both junctions with Preston Road from the 27th January 2014.

The path will be closed for a maximum of six months, although it is expected that it will reopen earlier.

The path is to be closed because of works to install a solar park adjacent to it and there is a likelihood of danger to users.

There is no alternative route.

For detailed enquiries please contact Michael Ellis

Contact Centre no. 03000 417171

Or for further details on temporary closures on the Rights of Way network see:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/countryside_access/traffic_regulation_orders.aspx

PROW – IN THE BOROUGH OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS

NOTICE OF THE MAKING OF AN ORDER TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE PUBLIC FOOTPATH WB14

PUBLIC FOOTPATH WB14 (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1), AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Kent County Council has made an Order the effect of which is to temporarily close Public Footpath WB14, between Coniston Avenue and Culverden Down from the 27th January 2014.

The path will be closed for a maximum of six months.

The path is closed because works to assess and repair the path due to a landslip are planned and there is a likelihood of danger to users.

The alternative route is via Coniston Avenue.

For detailed enquiries please contact Jonathan Bibby

Contact Centre no. 03000 417171

Or for further details on temporary closures on the Rights of Way network see:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/countryside_access/traffic_regulation_orders.aspx

Public Rights of Way and Access Service
Kent County Council
Invicta House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1XX **Dated: 2nd February 2014**

This document is available in alternative formats and can be explained in a range of languages.

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HIGHWAYS – ASHFORD AREA

NEW ROAD HILL, BONNINGTON (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

To allow access to the overhead phone cable network to provide a new customer service, Kent County Council intends to make an Order to temporarily prohibit through traffic on part of New Road Hill, Bonnington.

Closures are planned to commence from 18 February 2014 for up to 2 days, between 09:30 hours and 15:30 hours each day.

New Road Hill will be closed from the junction with Cherry Orchard Lane southwards for approximately 220 metres.

The alternative route is via New Road Hill, B2067 Bonnington Road and Boat Lane.

TALLY HO ROAD, SHADOXHURST (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of carriageway patching works, Kent County Council has made an Order to temporarily prohibit through traffic on part of Tally Ho Road, Shadoxhurst.

A closure is planned to commence from 3 February 2014 for up to 6 days or until the works have been completed.

Tally Ho Road will be closed junctions with Magpie Hall Road and Hornash Lane.

The alternative route is via Magpie Hall Road, Ashford Road, Hamstreet Road and Hornash Lane.

It is planned that works will be carried out between 07:30 hours and 16:30 hours each day. It is hoped that the road can be re-opened outside working hours but there may be occasions when this is not possible.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (VARIOUS ROADS, THE BOROUGH OF ASHFORD) (20MPH, 30MPH, 40MPH, 50MPH SPEED LIMITS AND DERESTRICTED ROADS) (AMENDMENT NO.7) ORDER 2014

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL HAS MADE AN ORDER UNDER SECTIONS 81, 82, 83 AND 84 OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT, THE EFFECT OF WHICH IS TO:

Reduce the speed limit on the A28 Canterbury Road from 50mph to 40 mph from the junction with Shalmsford Street for a distance of 402 metres in a south-westerly direction.

A copy of the proposed Order, which comes in to operation on 24/03/2014, together with an explanatory statement and a map showing the lengths of road concerned may be inspected during normal office hours at County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ, or at the offices of the KCC Ashford Highway Depot, Javelin Way, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8AD.

Anyone may, by application to the High Court within 6 weeks of the date of publication of this Notice, challenge the validity of the Orders or of any provision contained in them on the grounds that it is not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, or any instrument made thereunder, or that there has been a failure to comply with any statutory requirement in relation to the Orders.

HIGHWAYS – CANTERBURY AREA

B2205 CHESTFIELD ROAD, SWALECLIFFE (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER FEBRUARY 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

To enable rectification works to be carried out to the CCTV on the bridge, Kent County Council intends to make an Order to temporarily prohibit through traffic on part of B2205 Chestfield Road, Swalecliffe.

Chestfield Road will be closed in the vicinity of the railway bridge.

Overnight closures are planned to commence from 17 February 2014 for up to 3 nights, between 21:00 hours through until 06:00 hours each night.

The alternative route is via A2990 (Old) Thanet Way, B2205 Greenhill Bridge Road, Sea Street, Whitstable Road, Colewood Road and St John's Road.

CHURCH LANE, WESTBERE (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to provide a new water connection, Kent County Council intends to make an Order to temporarily prohibit through traffic on part of Church Lane, Westbere.

A closure is planned to commence from 17 February 2014 for up to 5 days or until the works have been completed.

Church Lane, Westbere will be closed in the vicinity of All Saints' Church.

The alternative route is via Westbere Lane, Bushey Hill Road, A2 Island Road and Staines Hill.

Due to the nature of these works, it will not be possible to re-open the road outside the working hours.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (VARIOUS ROADS, THE DISTRICT OF CANTERBURY) (20MPH, 30MPH, 40MPH, 50MPH SPEED LIMITS AND DERESTRICTED ROADS) (AMENDMENT NO.2) ORDER 2014

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL HAS MADE AN ORDER UNDER SECTIONS 81, 82, 83 AND 84 OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT, THE EFFECT OF WHICH IS TO:

Reduce the speed limit on the A28 Ashford Road from 50mph to 40 mph from the junction with Shalmsford Street for a distance of 357 metres in a north-easterly direction, and reduce the speed limit in Shalmsford Street from the junction with Ashford Road for a distance of 54m in an easterly direction.

A copy of the proposed Order, which comes in to operation on 24/03/2014, together with an explanatory statement and a map showing the lengths of road concerned may be inspected during normal office hours at County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ, or at the offices of the KCC Ashford Highway Depot, Javelin Way, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8AD.

Anyone may, by application to the High Court within 6 weeks of the date of publication of this Notice, challenge the validity of the Orders or of any provision contained in them on the grounds that it is not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, or any instrument made thereunder, or that there has been a failure to comply with any statutory requirement in relation to the Orders.

HIGHWAYS – DARTFORD AREA

HIGH CROSS ROAD AND WESTWOOD ROAD (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because BT require access for cabling works, Kent County Council intend to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on High Cross Road and Westwood Road, on or after 19th February 2014 between the hours of 09.30 and 15.30hrs for up to 2 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed as follows:

High Cross Road: from the junction Betsham Road to the junction

Of Whitehall Road.

Westwood Road: from the junction with Hook Green to the juction of Betsham Road.

There will be no access for through traffic between these junctions.

The alternative route is via Hook Green Road, Dale Road and Betsham Road.

ST EDMUNDS ROAD, DARTFORD (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of the Itallation of dropped kerbs, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on St Edmunds Road on or after 10th February 2014 for up to 3 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed outside the Baptist Church.

There will be no access for through traffic at this location.

The alternative route is via Farnol Road, Henderson drive and Keyes Road.

HIGHWAYS – DOVER AREA

ATTLEE AVENUE, AYLESHAM (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of electricity cabling works, Kent County Council has made an Order to temporarily prohibit through traffic on part of Attlee Avenue, Aylesham.

A closure is planned to commence from 3 February 2014 for up to 5 days or until the works have been completed.

Attlee Avenue will be closed in the vicinity of the junction with Dorman Avenue North.

The alternative route is via Dorman Avenue North, Market Place, Boulevard Courrieres, Vale View Road and Attlee Avenue.

Due to the nature of the works, it will not be possible to re-open the road outside the working hours.

CHERRY TREE AVENUE, DOVER (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of water mains works, Kent County Council intends to make an Order to temporarily prohibit northbound traffic on part of Cherry Tree Avenue, Dover.

Cherry Tree Avenue will be closed to northbound traffic (i.e. towards Barton Road) between the junctions with Balfour Road and Barton Road.

A closure is planned to commence from 17 February 2014 for up to 5 days.

The alternative route for northbound traffic is via A256 London Road and Buckland Avenue. Traffic from Balfour Road will be unable to turn right and will need to follow the diversion.

Southbound traffic is unaffected.

Due to the nature of the works, it will not be possible to re-open the road outside the working hours.

A further closure is likely, timed for school holidays, to be advised once dates confirmed.

CORNWALL ROAD, WALMER (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of essential carriageway repairs, Kent County Council intends to make an Order to temporarily prohibit through traffic on part of Cornwall Road, Walmer.

A closure is planned to commence from 17 February 2014 for up to 5 days or until the works have been completed.

Cornwall Road will be closed between the junctions with Dover Road and Downs Road.

The alternative route is via A258 Dover Road, The Strand, Gilford Road, Park Avenue, Mill Road and Hamilton Road.

Due to the nature of the works, it will not be possible to re-open the road outside the working hours.

A258 SANDWICH ROAD, SHOLDEN, DEAL (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of junction modifications and road resurfacing as part of a new housing development, Kent County Council intends to make an Order to temporarily prohibit through traffic on part of A258 Sandwich Road, Sholden, Deal.

A258 Sandwich Road will be closed between the junctions with Betteshanger Road and Sholden New Road.

~ There will be no through access between Deal and Sandwich using the A258 ~

Overnight closures are planned for the 4 nights of 20, 21, 24 and 25 February 2014, from 19:30 hours through to 04:00 hours each night.

The alternative route is via A258 Sandwich Road, Hacklinge Hill, Deal Road, A256 Sandwich Road, Eastry Bypass, Dover Road, Whitfield Bypass, A2 Trunk Road, A258 Deal Road, Dover Road, The Strand, Ranelagh Road, Prince Of Wales Terrace, Broad Street, Queen Street and London Road.

WENDERTON LANE, WINGHAM (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of maintenance works on water supply pipes, Kent County Council intends to make an Order to temporarily prohibit through traffic on part of Wenderton Lane, Wingham.

A closure is planned to commence from 17 February 2014 for up to 3 days.

Wenderton Lane will be closed between the junctions with Preston Hill and Hearts Delight Lane.

The alternative route is via Preston Hill and Hearts Delight Lane.

Due to the nature of the works, it will not be possible to re-open the road outside the working hours.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (VARIOUS ROADS, DOVER DISTRICT)

(WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND STREET PARKING PLACES) CONSOLIDATION (AMENDMENT NO 20) ORDER 2014

Notice is hereby given that KENT COUNTY COUNCIL propose to make the above named Order under sections 1(1), 2(1) to (3), 3(2), 4(1) and (2), 32(1), 35(1), 45, 46, 49 and 53 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Paragraph 20 of Schedule 9 to the Act:

The effect of the Order will be to prohibit waiting at any time at the following locations:-

Bevan Close, Deal – On both sides of the road. From the junction with Telegraph Road for 63m in a north-westerly direction.

Telegraph Road, Deal – On the north-west side of the road. For a distance of 10m either side of the junction with Bevan Close.

Full details are contained in the draft Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended by the proposals and a statement of reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined during normal office hours at Kent County Council Ashford Highway Depot, Javelin Way Ashford, Kent, TN24 8DH and at County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ.

HIGHWAYS – MAIDSTONE AREA

HEATHFIELD ROAD, MAIDSTONE (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to electricty power cables, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Heathfield Road, Maidstone, on or after 18 February 2014 for up to 6 days or until the works have been completed.

The whole length of the road will be closed.

The alternative route is via Boxley Road and Penenden Heath Road.

HIGHWAYS – SEVENOAKS AREA

EYNSFORD ROAD, CROCKENHILL, SEVENOAKS (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2013

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of the installation of a new cable, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Eynsford Road, Crockenhill, Sevenoaks, on or after 3rd February 2014 for up to 5 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed in the vicinity of Kidds Cottages and there will be no access for through traffic at this location.

The alternative route is via: Broadway, Green Court Road, Goldsel Road, High Street, London Road, Wested Road and vice versa.

HIGHWAYS – SHEPWAY AREA

IN THE DISTRICT OF SHEPWAY

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (VARIOUS ROADS, SHEPWAY DISTRICT)

(WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND STREET PARKING PLACES) CONSOLIDATION (AMENDMENT NO 17) ORDER 2014

Notice is hereby given that KENT COUNTY COUNCIL propose to make the above named Order under sections 1(1), 2(1) to (3), 3(2), 4(1) and (2), 32(1), 35(1), 45, 46, 49 and 53 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police in accordance with Paragraph 20 of Schedule 9 to the Act:

The effect of the Order will be to prohibit waiting at the following locations:-

No Waiting At Any Time (double yellow lines)

Canterbury Road – On the north east side of the road, for a distance of 10m either side of the junction with Mill Lane.

Mill Lane – On the west side of the road from the junction with Canterbury Road for a distance of 10m in a northerly direction.

On the west Side of the road for a distance of 10m either side of the junction with St Denys Road.

On the east side of the road from the junction with Old Rectory Close for a distance of 21m in a northerly direction.

On the east side of the road from the junction with Old Rectory Close for a distance of 10m in a southerly direction.

On the east side of the road from the junction with Canterbury Road for a distance of 17m in a northerly direction.

Old Rectory Close – From the junction with Mill Lane for a distance of 10m in a south easterly direction on both sides of the road

No Waiting (single yellow lines) Mon-Fri between 7:30am-8:45am and 2:45pm-4:00pm

Mill Lane – On the west side of the from a point 10m north of the junction with Canterbury Road for a distance of 42m in a northerly direction.

For further information, please contact Kent County Council Highways and Transportation, on 03000 418181 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways

Kent County Council kent.gov.uk

HIGHWAYS

On the west side of the road from a point 110m north of the junction with Canterbury Road for a distance of 48m in a northerly direction.

On the east side of the road from a point 10m south of the junction with Old Rectory Close for a distance of 137m in a southerly direction.

Old Rectory Close - On the north east side of the road, from a point 10m south east of the junction with Mill Lane around the entirety of Old Rectory Close up to a point 10 south east of the junction with Mill Lane on the south west side of the road.

Full details are contained in the draft Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended by the proposals and a statement of reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined during normal office hours at Kent County Council Ashford Highway Depot, Javelin Way Ashford, Kent, TN24 8DH and at County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ.

If you wish to offer support for or object to the proposed Order you should send the grounds in writing to Traffic Schemes Team,, Kent County Council Highways and Transportation, Ashford Highway Depot, 4 Javelin Way, Henwood Industrial Estate, Ashford, TN24 8AD or by email to TRO@kent.gov.uk by noon on Monday 24 February 2014.

HIGHWAYS – THANET AREA

A255 DANE COURT ROAD, BROADSTAIRS & ST PETER'S ROAD, MARGATE (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works in connection with the installation of Dane Valley Toucan Crossing, Kent County Council has made an Order to temporarily prohibit through traffic on part of A255 Dane Court Road, Broadstairs and St Peter's Road, Margate.

Closures are planned for the 3 Sundays of 9, 16 and 23 February 2014, between 07:00 hours and 19:00 hours each day.

A255 Dane Court Road, Broadstairs / St Peter's Road, Margate will be closed from the junction with Sacketts Hill to a point approximately 150 metres west of Broadley Road. Access to Broadley Road will be maintained.

The alternative route is via A255 Dane Court Road, A256 Westwood Road, A254 Ramsgate Road, B2052 College Road and A255 St Peter's Road.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT, 1984
(PEDESTRIAN CROSSING – A254 MARGATE ROAD, RAMSGATE)

Notice is hereby given that Kent County Council, as local traffic authority, and after consultation with the chief officer of police, proposes to establish a Zebra Crossing (in place of the existing crossing island) under Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all their enabling powers, as follows:

MARGATE ROAD, RAMSGATE– North of Coxes Lane.

Dated 02nd February 2014

Andy Corcoran

Traffic Schemes and Member Highway Fund Manager

Kent County Council Highways and Transportation

Full details of the proposal, together with the relevant plans, and any other information may be examined on Mondays to Fridays at Kent County Council Highways and Transportation, Javelin Way Ashford, TN24 8AD, between 8.30am and 5.00pm. If you wish to object, or support the proposed scheme, please contact Kent Highways and Transportation by midday on Monday 24th February 2014. Scheme ref: 13-MHF-TH-10.

HIGHWAYS – TONBRIDGE & MALLING AREA

CHURCH ROAD, OFFHAM (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because it is necessary to install a new gas service, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Church Road, Offham, on or after 17 February 2014 for up to 5 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed outside Church Farm.

The alternative route is via A20 London Road, B2016 Seven Mile Land and Teston Road.

PILGRIMS WAY/BATTLEFIELDS, WROTHAM (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of gas mains replacement, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Pilgrims Way/Battlefields, Wrotham, on or after 3 February 2014 for up to 10 working days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed outside number 24 Battlefields.

The alternative route is via Battlefields, Kemsing Road, High Street and Old London Road.

HIGHWAYS – TUNBRIDGE WELLS AREA

LITTLE MOUNT SION (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of a new gas service, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Little Mount Sion, Tunbridge Wells, on or after 3 February 2014 for up to 5 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed from the High Street to outside number 2 Little Mount Sion.

The alternative route is via B2023 Mount Sion and Berkeley Road.

NEILL'S ROAD, LAMBERHURST (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2014

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of BT overhead cabling works, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Neill's Road, Lamberhurst, on or after 18 February 2014 for up to 2 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed from Free Heath Road to Hoghole Lane.

The alternative route is via Free Heath Road, Sleepers Stile Road, Sweetings Lane and Hoghole Lane.

John Burr
Director of Highways & Transportation
Kent County Council
Invicta House
County Hall,
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ

Dated 2nd February 2014

For further information, please contact Kent County Council Highways and Transportation, on 03000 418181 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways

Kent County Council kent.gov.uk

To advertise in this section

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MARRIAGE LICENCES

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLIC NOTICE

A building certified for worship named Jubilee Auditorium, 48 Upper Stone Street, Maidstone in the registration district of Kent, in the Non-Metropolitan County of Kent, was on 3rd January 2014 registered for solemnising marriages therein pursuant to section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949 as amended by Section1 (1) of the Marriage Acts Amendment Act, 1958.

Superintendent Registrar

17 January 2014

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLIC NOTICE

A building certified for worship named International Christian Mission and Ashford Pentecostal Church in the registration district of Kent, in the Non-Metropolitan County of Kent, was on 23rd January 2014 registered for solemnising marriages therein pursuant to section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949 as amended by Section1 (1) of the Marriage Acts Amendment Act, 1958.

Superintendent Registrar

30 January 2014

LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Maidstone Borough Council

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 that the Maidstone Borough Council proposes to dispose of the freehold interest in approximately 32 sq. metres (38 sq. yards) of land at White Horse Lane, Otham.

Further details of this disposal may be obtained from the office of the Head of Finances and Resources, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6JQ, where the plan may be inspected during normal office hours.

Objections to this proposal should be sent in writing to the **Head of Finances and Resources** at the above address, not later than **8th March 2014.**

Paul Riley
Head of Finances and Resources
Dated 2nd February 2014.

www.maidstone.gov.uk

MAIDSTONE Borough Council

Public Notice

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL AS LOCAL AUTHORITY

Expansion of Lawn Primary School (Community)

Notice is given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Kent County Council intends to make a prescribed alteration to Lawn Primary School (Community), High Street, Northfleet, Kent, DA11 9HB from 01 September 2014.

It is proposed to enlarge Lawn Primary School by 10 Reception Year places taking their Published Admission Number to 30 (1FE) for the September 2014 intake.

The current capacity of the school is 140 and the proposed capacity will be 210. The most recent census recorded that there were 178 statutory age pupils registered at the school. The current admission number for the school is 20 and the proposed admission number will be 30.

Successive Reception year intakes will offer 30 places each year and the school will eventually have a total capacity of 210 pupils.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Education Cabinet Committee, Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ, or from the KCC website.

Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Richard Dalziel, Area Education Officer, Commercial Buildings, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4QG.

Patrick Leeson
Corporate Director,
Education Learning & Skills,
Kent County Council

Publication Date:
3rd February 2014

Kent County Council kent.gov.uk

Section 17 Licensing Act 2003
Licensing Act 2003:
Application for a new Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that ***Oliver Jon Stevens*** has applied to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council on ***24th January 2014*** for a new premises licence for ***Premises to be known as The Velo House, 5, St Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9GW***

To permit the sale by retail of alcohol - Monday to Sunday – 08.00 – 23.00 and from 08.00 – 02.00 on New Year's Eve

The application can be viewed at the offices of the Licensing Authority, Tunbridge Wells BC, The Town Hall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS between 9.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. Monday – Friday (except public holidays) or by visiting wwwsevenoaks.gov.uk/Licensing and following the link to the public register

Any person who wishes to make a representation in relation to this application must give notice in writing to the above local authority of his/her representation by ***22nd February (28 days from the day after the application is received by the licensing department)*** stating the grounds for making said representation.

The Licensing Authority must receive representations by the date given above. The Licensing Authority will have regard to any such representation in considering the application. It is an offence, under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in or in connection with an application for premises licence and the maximum fine on being convicted of such an offence is £5000.

Stephen Thomas LAW, Solicitors for the Applicant, 8, Grassmere, Leybourne, Kent ME19 5QP

Public Notice

THE GOVERNING BODY OF CHANTRY COMMUNITY ACADEMY AND KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Expansion of Chantry Community Academy

Notice is given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that the Governing Body Of Chantry Community Academy and Kent County Council intend to make a prescribed alteration to Chantry Community Academy, Ordnance Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2RL from 01 September 2014.

It is proposed to enlarge Chantry Community Academy by 30 Reception Year places taking their Published Admission Number to 60 (2FE) for the September 2014 intake.

The current capacity of the school is 210 and the proposed capacity will be 420. The most recent census recorded that there were 239 statutory age pupils registered at the school. The current admission number for the school is 30 and the proposed admission number will be 60.

Successive Reception year intakes will offer 60 places each year and the school will eventually have a total capacity of 420 pupils.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from Chantry Community Academy, or from the KCC website.

Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to:

Richard Dalziel, Area Education Officer, Commercial Buildings, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4QG.

Martin Clinton
Executive Principal
Chantry Community Academy

Patrick Leeson
Corporate Director,
Education Learning & Skills,
Kent County Council

Kent County Council kent.gov.uk

Publication Date: 3rd February 2014

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THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VARIOUS ROADS, BOROUGH OF SWALE)

(WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND STREET PARKING PLACES)
(AMENDMENT No.8B) ORDER 2013

Notice is hereby given that KENT COUNTY COUNCIL have made the above Order under sections 1(1), 2(1) to (3), 3(2), 4(1) and (2), 32(1), 35(1), 45, 46, 49 and 53 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act:

The Order was made on 31st January 2014, will come into effect on 17th February 2014, and will amend the Kent County Council (Various Roads, Borough of Swale) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2010 by

(a) amending the existing double yellow lines along parts of Leysdown Road, Leysdown, Isle of Sheppey from Seasonal Restrictions to full time double yellow lines;

(b) amending the existing seasonal waiting times in parking bays in Leysdown Road and The Promenade, Leysdown from 30 minutes, no return within 30 minutes, to 1 hour, no return within 1 hour;

(c) extending the existing double yellow lines and installing additional double yellow lines in Capel Road, Whitehall Road and Hanover Close, Sittingbourne to improve traffic movements;

(d) introducing sections of waiting restrictions between Monday to Friday, 8.30am-9.30am and 2.30pm-5pm in Capel Road and Whitehall Road, Sittingbourne to improve vehicle movements at school drop off and collection times, as well as new parking bays in sections of Capel Road from Monday to Saturday, 8am-5pm with 1 hour parking, no return within 2 hours;

(e) establishing new parking places for disabled persons vehicles (blue badge holders) in Orchard View, Teynham (7), High Street, Queenborough (85), East Street (Outside Aldi's) and Rock Road (64) Sittingbourne.

The Order includes some wording changes of an administrative matter which will make no alterations to existing parking and waiting restrictions, and will require no changes to existing parking lines or signs.

Full details are contained in the made Order which, together with a statement of the Council's reasons for proposing to make the Order, a map and a copy of any Orders which will be amended by the made Order may be examined at the Borough Council Offices, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT, or Sheerness Gateway Offices, 38-42 High Street, Sheerness, ME12 1NL during normal office hours.

Any person wishing to question the validity of an Order or any of its provisions on the ground that it is not within the powers of the relevant enabling Act or that a requirement of any such enabling Act or of any relevant regulations made thereunder has not been complied with may, within 6 weeks from the date on which the Order was made, make application for the purpose to the High Court.

If you have any questions concerning the Order or require further information please contact Swale Borough Council (01795 417125) during normal office hours.

This Notice is published on behalf of Kent County Council, County Hall, Maidstone,
ME14 2XQ.

For publication in
From Sunday 2nd February, 2014

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THE MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Town and Country Planning Act
Notice of Applications

MA/13/1814/S - THE OLD POST OFFICE, CHURCH STREET, TESTON, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME18 5AH - An application for listed building consent for replacement of all windows except those to front elevation with timber double glazed units. **Reason: 3**

MA/13/1815/S - THE OLD POST OFFICE, CHURCH STREET, TESTON, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME18 5AH - An application for listed building consent for additional window to rear elevation **Reason: 3**

MA/13/1816/S - THE OLD POST OFFICE, CHURCH STREET, TESTON, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME18 5AH - An application for listed building consent for removal of existing wall between kitchen and dining room. **Reason: 3**

MA/13/2043/N - 1, CULPEPER CLOSE, HOLLINGBOURNE, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME17 1UD - Demolition of existing garage and erection of attached house with associated works including roof extension to 1 Culpeper Close. **Reason: 9**

MA/13/2197/S - LAND AT, BOUGHTON LANE, MAIDSTONE, KENT - Erection of 220(no) residential dwellings together with access, parking, landscaping, and ancillary works on land at Boughton Lane, and provision of new playing fields for New Line Learning Academy. **Reason: 6, 7**

MA/13/2225/S - 92, THE QUARRIES, BOUGHTON MONCHELSEA, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME17 4NJ - Erection of two storey rear extension. **Reason: 1**

MA/13/2228/N - ARNOLD FARM, BACK STREET, LEEDS, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME17 1TF - Retrospective application for the erection of polytunnels in connection with soft fruit production. **Reason: 6, 7**

MA/14/0003/S - BLETCHENDEN COTTAGE, BLETCHENDEN ROAD, HEADCORN, KENT, TN27 9JB - Erection of a single storey rear extension. **Reason: 1**

MA/14/0062/S - NEW LODGE HOUSE, HUNTON ROAD, MARDEN, TONBRIDGE, KENT, TN12 9SL - Application for prior approval of the local planning authority for the erection of a replacement agricultural building for storage. **Reason: 1**

Reasons for advertisement key:
1 - Applications affects the setting of a Listed Building.
3 - Application is for Listed Building Consent.
6 - Application is Major Development.
7 - Application affects a Public Right of Way.
9 - Application does not accord with the Local Plan.

MAIDSTONE Borough Council

Copies of applications listed may be seen at Maidstone Gateway, Maidstone during office hours (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm, and Saturday 9am to 1pm). Any representations should be made in writing to me by no later than **16th February 2014,** quoting the application number.

Rob Jarman, Head of Development Management, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ. **Dated:** 2nd February 2014

Swale BOROUGH COUNCIL

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

Swale Borough Council as Local Planning Authority has received the following applications which are being advertised to ascertain the views of persons living near the sites and other interested parties. The proposed developments relate to one or more of the following:

1. The site of the application is within/affecting a designated Conservation Area (Section 73) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
2. The proposed development may affect the Listed Building or it's setting.
3. The application is for a Major Development.
4. The application would affect a right of way to which Part III of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) applies.
6. This application may be of wider public interest.

REPRESENTATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS MUST BE MADE BY 17 FEBRUARY 2014

SW/13/1368:
Listed Building Consent for window replacements identical in size and detail to existing on the north and south elevations. Remedial works to alter the pitch of the porch. Reinstatement of missing cornice detailing - Sutton Baron House, Sutton Baron Road, BORDEN; **REASON 2**

SW/13/1492:
Erection of detached property with associated landscaping + parking. Similar proposal approved under SW/05/0967 - Church Hill School Mews, Church Hill, HERNHILL; **REASONS 1 & 4**

SW/13/1529:
Change of use for part of existing transport depot to hand carwash plus construction of canopy to washing area - Transport Depot, Standard Quay, Abbey Road, FAVERSHAM; **REASON 1**

SW/13/1558:
Listed Building Consent for demolition of wall and removal of wooden gate and wooden shed. Rebuilding of wall and installation of new wooden gate and shed. Cracks on western end of main house to be repaired and re-decorated - Stonebridge Lodge, West Street, FAVERSHAM; **REASONS 1 & 2**

SW/13/1571:
The erection of four wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height of up to 126.5 metres, together with a substation and control building, associated hardstandings, an improved access junction, connecting internal access tracks, and other related infrastructure - New Rides Farm, Leysdown Road, EASTCHURCH; **REASONS 3, 4 & 6**

SW/14/0013:
(A) Change of use of first floor shop store (Class A1) to two no. two bedroom flats plus ancillary office for existing ground floor shop including front first floor replacement windows (B) Alterations to existing ground floor shopfront to provide access to first floor accommodation - 19A Preston Street, FAVERSHAM; **REASONS 1 & 2**

SW/14/0033 SW/14/0034:
Internal and external alterations - Primrose House, Primrose Lane, BREDGAR; **REASONS 1 & 2**

SW/14/0038 SW/14/0078:
Proposed replacement of non-original shop front within existing opening and internal alterations to convert existing retail unit into two self-contained retail units - Blundells of Sittingbourne, 35 High Street, SITTINGBOURNE; **REASONS 1 & 2**

SW/14/0047:
Extension to rear of existing ground floor study & erection of first floor above - 126 The Street, NEWNHAM; **REASON 1**

SW/14/0056:
Replacement condenser units on flat roof - 99 High Street, SITTINGBOURNE; **REASON 1**

Particulars of the proposal(s) can be obtained from Planning Services, Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, where copies of the applications and all documents submitted with them may be inspected during office hours; any representations should be made in writing to this address.

James Freeman
Head of Planning

To place your notice here, call the Kent Public Notice team on 01303 817056

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 13 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010 (AS AMENDED)

KCC/SW/0007/2014 and KCC/SW/0008/2014 – Proposed development at land at Ridham Dock, Iwade, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8SR

MVV Environment Ltd is applying to Kent County Council for planning permission for the following:

KCC/SW/0007/2014 - A revised surface water drainage scheme.

KCC/SW/0008/2014 - Variation of conditions 6 and 9 of planning permission SW/10/774.

The proposed development affects the setting of a public right of way.

You may view these applications at Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3HT.

KCC/TH/0388/2013 - Proposed development at land north of Ellington and Hereson School, Newlands Lane, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6RH

Kent County Council Property and Infrastructure Support is applying to Kent County Council Planning Applications Group for planning permission for the construction of a new single storey Special Education Needs (SEN) school for pupils aged between 2 and 19, with associated car parking and hard/soft landscaping, for the relocation of The Foreland School.

The development site is in close proximity to, and may affect, a public right of way.

You may view this application at Thanet District Council, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent CT9 1XZ.

KCC/TW/0002/2014 - Proposed development at Southborough C of E Primary School, Broomhill Park Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 0JY

Kent County Council Property and Infrastructure Support is applying to Kent County Council Planning Applications Group for planning permission for a revised application for the proposed erection of a new teaching building and revised parking layout including an additional 9 car parking spaces and other external alterations.

You may view this application at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, 8 Grosvenor Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2AB.

Alternatively, details of all applications can be viewed on Kent County Council's website at www.kent.gov.uk/viewapplications or at our offices in Maidstone at the address below during all reasonable office hours.

We accept comments online via our website, by email to planningrepresentations@kent.gov.uk or in writing to Planning Applications Group, Kent County Council, First Floor, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XX within 21 days from the date of this notice. Please quote the application reference number and note that comments may be drawn to the attention of Council Members, the applicant and other interested persons and may include publishing on the Borough / District Council website.

Sharon Thompson
Head of Planning
Applications Group
Kent County Council
Dated: 2 February 2014

Kent County Council kent.gov.uk

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Canterbury City Council

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Canterbury City Council will be held at The Guildhall, Westgate, Canterbury at 7pm on Thursday 13 February 2014.

Thursday 20 February has been reserved for a meeting of the Full Council should it be required.

Colin Carmichael
Chief Executive
Canterbury City Council
Military Road
Canterbury CT1 1YW

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Folkestone Hythe & Romney Marsh Shepway District Council

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

Y14/0006/SH# - Light Railway Restaurant Dungeness Road Dungeness Romney Marsh Kent - Extensions and alterations to the Light Railway Restaurant.

Y14/0050/SH - Bramble Hill Radnor Cliff Crescent Folkestone Kent CT20 2JQ - Felling of three Sycamores and various pruning works to seven Oak trees, all subject of Tree Preservation Order No.15 of 2001 and followed by the planting of two replacement trees

Y14/0001/SH - The Studio Cottage Canterbury Road Etchinghill Folkestone Kent - Felling of one Yew tree and 2 metre overall reduction and reshape of a second Yew tree, both subject of Tree Preservation Order No. 23 of 2001

Y14/0004/SH# - The Grange Dennes Lane Lydd Romney Marsh Kent - Listed building consent for internal and external alterations to existing outbuilding in connection with the change of use of the workshop/garage to a holiday let.

Y14/0017/SH - Elham Park Lodge Droveway Stelling Minnis Canterbury Kent - Installation of solar arrays.

Y14/0054/SH - Lisheen The Undercliff Sandgate Folkestone Kent - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising the felling of two Sycamore and an Ash and the overall crown reduction by 1.5 metres of a Sycamore (T1) and the overall crown reduction by 1 metre of a Sycamore (T3).

Any representations should be made in writing to the Head of Planning, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY or emailed to planning@shepway.gov.uk. Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. It should be noted that any representations received will be made available for public inspection.

Some applications can be viewed at other locations in addition to the Civic Centre, Folkestone. The applications are marked as follows:

\# - The One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney

\+ - Hythe Town Council Offices, Stade Street, Hythe

Applications can be viewed and comments made online at http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/.

The applications marked (') do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

C Lewis, Head of Planning
Shepway District Council

Folkestone Hythe & Romney Marsh Shepway District Council

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (THE DISTRICT OF SHEPWAY, VARIOUS ROADS) (PROVISION OF ON-STREET DISABLED PERSON'S PARKING PLACES) CONSOLIDATION ORDER 2012 (AMENDMENT NO. 5)

Notice is hereby given that KENT COUNTY COUNCIL proposes the above Order under Sections 1, 2, 32 and 124 of and Part IV of Schedule 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act:

The Order proposes to install disabled persons parking places in the following streets: -

16 Newlands, St Marys Bay; 29 Wakefield Way, Hythe; 8 Earls Avenue, Folkestone; 5-6 New Bridge Way, St Marys Bay; 19 St Lukes Way, Hawkinge; 30 St Francis Road, Folkestone; Terminus Walk, The Tram Road, Folkestone; 47 The Green, Lydd; 9 Oaks Road, Folkestone; 32 Tyson Road, Folkestone; 4 Dunkirk Close, Dymchurch.

This Order also proposes to revoke disable persons' parking places from the following streets: -

3 Clifton Crescent, Folkestone; 3-5 Elmstead Place, Folkestone; 13 Kent Road, Folkestone; 23 Morehall Avenue, Folkestone; 20 Mount Pleasant Road, Folkestone; 15 The Orchards, Elham;

A copy of the proposed Order, a copy of any Orders which may be amended by it, and a statement of the council's reasons for proposing it can be inspected during normal office hours at the Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY, during normal office hours.

If you have any views about the proposed Order you should make them in writing to (DPPB Consultation), Parking Services, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY. Or email DPPB.Consultation@shepway.gov.uk stating "Amendment 5" in the subject title.

We must receive any representations before 5pm on Monday 24th February 2014 for them to be considered. For legal reasons we cannot accept representations over the phone or in person.

If you have any questions concerning the proposed Order or require further information please contact Shepway District Council (Transportation Department), Council Offices, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY (01303 853240 during normal office hours).

This notice is published by Shepway District Council on behalf of Kent Highway Services, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XX. Kent Highway Services is part of Kent County Council.

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Town and Country Planning Acts

The Council is required to give notice of the following applications

14/00080/HOUSE Walters Farm High Street, Brenchley
- 3-bay garage with studio/workroom over (amendments to approved garage under planning permission TW/10/03347/FUL) (LB) (CA)

14/00131/LBC Rectory Park Rectory Park Road, Horsmonden
- Listed Building Consent: Substitution of consented window for glazed door to proposed kitchen (LB)

13/03002/FULL Godfreys Yard North Farm Road, Southborough Town Council
- Partial reconstruction of fire damaged building (PROW)

14/00062/FULL Garland House 2 Garlinge Road, Southborough Town Council
- Lower ground floor extension to replace existing sun lounge with 4 bedrooms and bathroom facilities; First floor extension over part of the lower ground floor to provide additional lounge area (LB)

14/00151/HOUSE Lampington Cottage The Green, Speldhurst
- Replacement fence (LB) (CA)

(DEVPLN) Departure from the Development Plan (PROW) Affecting A Public Right of way (CA) Affecting a Conservation Area (LB) Affecting a Listed Building (MAJOR)

Major Applications (MAST) Mast Applications (EIA) Applications Accompanied by an EIA Statement.

You may view these applications on our website (www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk), at the The Old Fire Station, Stone Street, Cranbrook or at Gateway, 8 Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells. We accept comments online, by email to planningcomments@tunbridgewells.gov.uk or in writing to the address below. Comments should be made within 7 days from the date of this notice, although we may accept them after this date.

You should quote the reference and be aware that we make all comments available for inspection, placing them on the file and publishing them on the internet. We do not publish signatures, telephone numbers or email addresses on the internet.

James Freeman
Head of Planning Services, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells TN1 1RS

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Dated: 01 February 2014

Planning applications

Canterbury City Council

Notice under Article 13 of the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010
Notice under Article 8 of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995
Notice under Section 67 and/or Section 73 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Notice under Regulation 5 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990
Notice under Regulation 5A of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2004

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the council:

CA//13/02378/FUL: 8 Willow Way, Chestfield, CT5 3JJ Additional window to the front of the property **Applicant: Mr G Davis** Reason: Conservation area.

CA//14/00047/FUL: Land opposite 16 Burgate, Canterbury CT1 2HJ Replacement and upgrade of existing public telephone kiosk with kiosk combining public telephone service and ATM service. **Applicant: BT Payphones** Reason: Setting of listed building in conservation area.

CA//14/00058/FUL: Land adj to Huntsman and Horn Public House, Margate Road, Herne, CT6 7AF Erection of eight dwellings on the land adjacent to the Huntsman & Horn Public House **Applicant: Bacchus Partners** Reason: Setting of listed building in conservation area.

CA//14/00080/FUL: Spring Cottage, 35 High Street, Sturry, CT2 0BD Proposed internal alterations to convert the existing garage into a family room and also to increase the ground floor bedroom by removing a wall. **Applicant: Mr and Mrs Dath** Reason: Setting of listed building in conservation area.

CA//14/00081/LB: Spring Cottage, 35 High Street, Sturry, CT2 0BD Proposed internal alterations to convert the existing garage into a family room and also to increase the ground floor bedroom by removing a wall. **Applicant: Mr and Mrs Dath** Reason: Work to a listed building.

CA//14/00090/FUL: Tiuccia, Derringstone Street, Barham, CT4 6QB Loft conversion with two pitched rear dormers this is a re-design from the original application. **Applicant: Mr Camodey** Reason: Conservation area.

CA//14/00093/FUL: The Elms, North Stream, Marshside, Chislet, CT3 4EE Demolition of a single storey side/rear extension and a side conservatory to the east side of the property. Erection of a subservient two storey side/rear extension to the east side of the property to create additional space for an integral annexe with shared facilities. Erection of a subsurvient two storey side extension to the west of the property to create a large family lounge and master bedroom. **Applicant: Dr S Brant** Reason: Conservation area.

CA//14/00101/LB: 19 High Street, Bridge, CT4 5JZ Proposed internal alterations to ground and second floors and alterations to roof. **Applicant: Mr C Burton** Reason: Work to a listed building.

CA//14/00102/LB: 21 High Street, Bridge, CT4 5JZ Proposed internal and external alterations – new internal door and new sash window. **Applicant: Mr Burton** Reason: Work to a listed building

CA//14/00106/FUL: 22 Lanfranc Gardens, Harbledown, CT2 8NJ Proposed loft conversion including dormer to rear elevation. **Applicant: Mr Delbridge** Reason: Conservation area.

CA//14/00123/FUL: 13 Gordon Road, Herne Bay, CT6 5QX Single-storey rear extension to form bedroom and en-suite. **Applicant: Mrs Amanda Smith** Reason: Conservation area.

CA//14/00124/LB: 68 Stour Street, Canterbury, CT1 2NZ Revised scheme for the refurbishment and alteration of 68 Stour Street including the demolition of outbuildings and associated works. **Applicant: Mr R Cochrane** Reason: Work to a listed building.

CA//14/00144/FUL: 174 The Street, Adisham, CT3 3LB Replacement side extension single-storey porch and loft conversion with rooflights and gable end elevation window. **Applicant: Mr Challinor** Reason: Conservation area.

Any representations should be submitted via public access on the planning pages of the website **www.canterbury.gov.uk/dc** to arrive on or before **Monday 24 February 2014.**

The weekly list of applications can be viewed on our website at **www.canterbury.gov.uk/dc**

Ian Brown, Head of Planning and Regeneration
Friday 31 January 2014

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TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
PLANNING APPLICATIONS
LISTED BUILDING CONSENTS
CONSERVATION AREA CONSENTS

Dover District Council

DOV/13/01098 Outline application for the erection of 15 flats
Studio 1, Adrian Street, Dover, CT17 9AT **MAJ**

DOV/13/01106 Installation of ground mounted photovoltaic solar arrays to provide 11MW generation capacity together with power inverter systems; transformer stations; internal access track; landscaping; stock fencing and associated infrastructure
Old Engine Shed Field, Sutton Court Farm, (Land between Pineham & East Langdon) **MAR**

DOV/14/00036 Change of use of land for touring caravans, motorised caravans, tents and caravans
Sandwich Leisure Park Site C, Woodnesborough Road, Sandwich, CT13 0AA **MAJ**

DOV/14/00052 Erection of a two storey rear extension
5 Bowes Villas, Felderland Lane, Worth, Deal, CT14 0BS **ARW**

DOV/13/00936 Installation of 3 replacement sash windows
Basement Flat, 3 Victoria Park, Dover, CT16 1QR **LCN**

DOV/14/00047 Variation of condition 3, 4, 7, 9 and 13 of planning permission DOV/12/00684 to allow submission of details prior to commencement of any buildings on site including the construction of foundations (application under section 73)
1-7, Cowgate Hill, Dover, CT17 9AY **CON**

DOV/14/00053 Change of use of land to hold a market for a maximum number of 40 market stalls every Tuesday and Saturday 8am-5pm; and application to hold a market for a maximum number of 40 market stalls on any day of the week 8am-5pm (limited to a maximum of 2 per week)
Site at Market Square &, Cannon Street, Dover **CON**

DOV/14/00058 Outline application for the redevelopment of site to include: demolition of some existing buildings (and associated infrastructure); change of use of some existing buildings (from B1 to use classes: B2, B8, Sui Generis (Energy) and D1 uses); the provision of new commercial (use classes: A3/4, B1, B2, B8, C1, D1 and Sui Generis) and residential (use class: C3) development; associated site preparation/enabling, infrastructure, and landscaping works; and provision of car parking (with some matters reserved)
Discovery Park, Ramsgate Road, Sandwich, CT13 9ND **MESD**

DOV/14/00038 Erection of a single storey rear extension, bricking up of existing doorway and insertion of door and side lights in bay window, replacement roof to existing rear extension with internal and external alterations (existing shed to be demolished)
16 Dolphin Street, Deal, CT14 6LX **LCN**

DOV/14/00039 Erection of a single storey rear extension, bricking up of existing doorway and insertion of door and side lights in bay window, replacement roof to existing rear extension with internal and external alterations (existing shed to be demolished)
16 Dolphin Street, Deal, CT14 6LX **LCN**

DOV/14/00046 Removal of condition 7 of planning permission DOV/13/00891 relating to outdoor seating (application under section 73)
64-65 The Strand, Walmer, Deal, CT14 7DP **CON**

DOV/14/00049 Erection of a detached building to house composting toilets (existing building to be demolished)
Site SW of Richborough Castle, Richborough, Ash, Sandwich, CT13 9JW **RSLB**

Reason for Advert Codes:-
CON – Within Conservation Area **LCN** – Listed Building in a Conservation Area
ARW – Affects a Public Right of Way **MAJ** – Major Development
MAR- Major Development & affects a Public Right of Way
MESD – Proposal is a major development, a departure from the Development Plan & is accompanied by an Environmental Statement
RSLB - Affects the setting of a Listed Building and a public right of way

Some applications are not publicised in this list. All applications may be inspected at the Council Offices, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, to which address any representations (to include a postal address) should be sent **within 21 days** marked "for the attention of Planning". Applications may also be viewed, and comments on applications may be made on our website www.dover.gov.uk/planning or at Dover Gateway, 71 Castle Street, Dover, Deal Library or the Area Office, The Guildhall, Sandwich

Failure to meet the above deadline may jeopardise the chances of representations being considered. Any representations received may be made available for inspection by the public, and may be copied to others, including the secretary of state and the applicant if there is an appeal against the council's decision. Representations will not be acknowledged until an application has been determined.

Please note that the Council does not accept any responsibility for any incomplete or inaccurate description of any application.

Fuller has Sochi's slopes



Pictures: NICK ATKINS



AIR TIME: Farnborough's Aimee Fuller will be one to watch at the Winter Olympics

Aimee Fuller talks to **Greg Miles** about her journey from motocross to being selected to snowboard for Great Britain in Sochi via America, Belfast and the odd stop at her nan's house in Kent.

OLYMPIAN-IN-WAITING Aimee Fuller was sitting in a bar in France four years ago watching in awe as her teammates took to the halfpipe at the Vancouver Games.

There was plenty of excitement that night but only in the pride she showed for her Great Britain teammates as at that stage an Olympic appearance for her seemed out of the question. That was because her sport was not even recognised as an Olympic sport back then.

Now the 22-year-old, who grew up in Farnborough, is just a week away from representing Great Britain and flying the Kent flag in Sochi in the newly-inducted event, snowboard slopestyle, which involves pulling off tricks on a downhill course to impress judges.

She certainly left it late to make the Games, with her qualification only sealed in the penultimate World Cup event in Stoneham, Canada, in the middle of January.

She needed to finish in the top six of that event to make the Olympics, which she managed by qualifying first for the final, in which she finished fifth.

"I've never had pressure like it in my life," she said. "I can't believe I did it. I'm still in shock. It was all down to that – I was completely buzzing.

"I qualified through to the finals in first place, which automatically meant I was in the top six. I got to the bottom of the slope and phoned my mum and said 'I've done it'. She said 'You've done what? Are you hurt?'.

"It was a very intense week, but I've got plenty of great memories."

Competing at the Olympics was never on the cards for Fuller, who at the age of 12 moved to America with her parents and has since relocated to Belfast – not that she spends much time at home these days.

An adrenaline junkie from a young age, she first experienced snowboarding and skiing at Bromley's dry slope shortly before moving across the pond.

"When I was four, my dad bought me a quad bike," she said. "When I was six, I got my first motorbike and competed in motocross quite competitively. I think I came second in the British Girls' Championship. That was a big part of my life when I was younger."

Another interest from a young age has played a big part in helping her pull off all the gravity-defying tricks.

"I did gymnastics for a few years and that has helped with my snowboarding, the air awareness," she said. "I've got a trampoline in my garden. Just before breakfast, I go out and do some back-flips and side-spins. It definitely helps.

"You can resemble tricks and do things similar and create the same motions in the air. I would like to do a lot more of it. Red Bull has helped me train in reduced-risk environments. We try things on an air-bag. That's been really helpful."

> **"The riders going are creating history. Me and Jenny Jones will be the first to represent Great Britain. It's a big step for snowboarding in the UK."**
>
> **Aimee Fuller,** Slopestyle snowboarder

Her life-changing moment came after a week away at a snowboarding camp in America when snowboarding company Roxy, which has its own team, spotted her.

"When I moved back to the UK, I had a phone call inviting me out for a trip. That one phone call changed my life," she said.

"That was from my first sponsor, Roxy. From there I became part of the British Junior Team. It became more serious when I did my A-levels. It's been a crazy journey and a lot of hard work behind the scenes that people don't see, like all the travelling and time in the gym."

Life simply has not stopped for her since then as she began competing on the world stage individually and with the British age-group teams. But the Olympics were still not in the equation until this time last year.

"I've not been thinking I'm going to the Olympics," she said. "Last December the World Cup circuit started. I've been going with the flow when not injured. It's crazy that it's worked out."

Naturally, she spends time with a lot of winter athletes who have been to previous Games and so has an idea of what to expect.

She is also looking forward to creating history by taking part in the slopestyle's debut at an Olympic Games alongside GB team-mate and medal-hopeful Jenny Jones.

"We've had snowboard and halfpipe for the last four Games," she said. "A lot of my friends have been and it's cool to hear their experience. It sounds like a good time – really fun.

"The riders going are creating history. Me and Jenny Jones will be the first two to represent Great Britain.

in her sights



What exactly is slopestyle?

WHILE other Olympic disciplines are all about speed, snowboard slopestyle is more about substance.

Set for its first appearance as an Olympic sport after being selected in 2011, it will offer spectacular viewing in a different way for the crowds in Sochi.

As skiiers and snowboarders hurtle downhill in the various slaloms, slopestylers navigate what is effectively a snow 'play park' on their way to the finish line.

The competitor aims to impress the judges with their best tricks using the obstacles on the course including jumps, ramps, boxes and rails

Each rider has two runs along the 635-metre course in Rosa Khutor, with the competition following an elimination format of semi-finals and then a finals section.

Although new to the Olympics, it has been a popular part of winter sports programmes the world over for a while now.

The Winter X Games and World Cup series of events are the biggest dates on the calendar for riders, with it drawing in huge crowds and television-viewing courtesy of broadcaster ESPN.

The slopestyle event starts with the qualification on Thursday, February 6 (6am).

Then follow the semi-finals (6.30am) and finals (9.15am), both on Sunday, February 9.

"It's a big step for snowboarding in the UK. It's great the team and support we have got. It's really exciting."

Importantly, she feels in a good place ahead of Sochi, having finished seventh at the X Games in Aspen in America, which she could have missed to spend more time at home.

"It's been really great training for Sochi," she said. "I finished the World Cup and could have gone home, but I've kept going and had a productive week on the snowboard.

"I've stayed and tuned a few things. I tried a trick I haven't done for a while, the double backflip, which I landed. I think I was the first girl to do that in slopestyle.

"I fell on the final jump, which was a bit of a bummer, but it was a really good learning experience for the Games. "

With crowds numbering thousands and huge interest from the media, the X Games proved to be the perfect warm-up for Fuller.

Much of that is down to taking a different approach to competitions this year after self-imposed pressure took its toll.

> **"Last year I started off really well – I expected so much from the winter and it didn't work out. I put a lot of pressure on myself to do well."**
>
> **Aimee Fuller,** Slopestyle snowboarder

"Right now I feel like it's the best I've ever ridden," she said. "I had a few injuries last year and it knocked my confidence a lot. I've taken a different approach this year and thought I'd enjoy it as much as possible.

"Last year I started off really well – I expected so much from the winter and it didn't work out. I put a lot of pressure on myself to do well. This year I got my head down and didn't put too much pressure on myself. At the end of the day, the Olympics is a global competition and an opportunity for us to display our sport at its best, but there are plenty of other opportunities to do that."

Despite being away for most months of the year, Fuller still manages to fit in the odd visit to Kent, primarily when there is not enough time to get back to Belfast.

"I'm still strongly attached to Kent," she said. "My nana and granddad live there and all my friends are there.

"Normally, if I have time to go home between trips, it doesn't make sense to get back to Belfast and I stay at my nan's."

She is not making any grand statements ahead of the Games, although hopes to finish in the top six.

"I would just like to do the best run I could do. I've got a run in my head I know I want to do," she said. "I just want it to be solid and clean.

"It really is who can put the most impressive and technical combo down on the day."

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McCarthy happy for Hewitt to extend loan stay with Gills

ELLIOTT Hewitt looks set to extend his stay with Gillingham after being given the go-ahead by Ipswich Town boss Mick McCarthy.

Hewitt's deal was set to expire at the end of January, but McCarthy has given his blessing for the Welsh under-21 international to continue plying his trade at Priestfield.

"Elliott needs to play games, he needs to see out the rest of the season playing another 20 matches," McCarthy told Ipwsich's official website.

"Then we will see his true mettle. We will see then if he can come back here and start next season in the first team.

"I had a chat with Peter Taylor and told him I'm looking for an experienced right-back and if I could get one in, I'd discuss Elliott staying there."



METTLE: Elliott Hewitt



2014: Graham Johnson is new man

Presidential role at Kent for Johnson

KENT have announced Graham Johnson as their new president for 2014, replacing Bob 'The Cat' Bevan MBE.

Johnson, a former player and current chairman of cricket at the club, was nominated for the role by Bevan.

The two first got to know each other when Bevan helped out with Johnson's benefit year in 1983.

"I have seen first-hand, over many years, the delight shown by past Kent presidents in their appointment and the way they have enjoyed their year in office," said Johnson.

"That has been particularly evident in the year of The Cat. Being president is a great honour."

Lillis quits Mos for a fresh start

HARRISON Lillis has opted to leave Invicta Dynamos after finding his ice time limited in recent weeks.

The blue-liner was not involved in the Dynamos' 8-2 win over Milton Keynes Thunder last Sunday, having decided to move on for pastures new.

The 20-year-old had come through the youth ranks at the club.

Ashes retained as Edwards shines

KENT'S Charlotte Edwards put in a captain's performance and hit the winning runs as England's women retained the Ashes this week.

The opener, who is also Kent captain, made 92 from 59 balls in the opening T20 match on Wednesday which England won by nine wickets to take an unbeatable series lead.

Former favourite returns as coach

GILLINGHAM have named former striker Steve Lovell as their new youth coach.

The ex-Wales international was at Priestfield from 1987 to 1992 and scored 104 goals in 275 games.

He will work with academy manager Darren Hare, having left the staff ranks at Charlton Athletic.

Race ace Webb to make TT debut ride

TUNBRIDGE Wells racer Danny Webb has announced he will ride the Isle of Man TT for the first time this year.

The 22-year-old will ride for KMR Kawasaki at the event in May and June. He said: "I'm a big TT fan. I've already been to the event and I have always said that I wanted to do it one day."

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